



Revolution in John Locke's Philosophy: *The Two Treatises of Government*

الثورة في فلسفة جون لوك: الأطروحتان عن الحكومة

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الملخص:

تمثل فلسفة جون لوك كما عبر عن ذلك غراهام روجرز تحولاً محورياً في فكر التنوير، حيث تركز على الحقوق الفردية، والتجريبية، والعقد الاجتماعي. تتحدى أفكار لوك الثورية الحق الإلهي للملوك وتدعو إلى أن تكون الحكومة حامية للحياة والحرية والملكية. يُعتبر كتاب لوك أطروحتان عن الحكومة نص أساسي في الفلسفة السياسية يوضح إطاراً ثورياً لفهم الحكومة وحقوق الأفراد. في الأطروحة الأولى، ينتقد لوك الحق الإلهي للملوك، مجادلاً ضد فكرة أن الملوك يمتلكون سلطة إلهية متأصلة على رعاياهم. في الأطروحة الثانية، يحدد لوك رؤيته لمجتمع مدني يتشكل من خلال عقد اجتماعي، حيث يوافق الأفراد على التخلي عن بعض الحريات مقابل حماية حقوقهم الأساسية من قبل الحكومة. ويؤكد لوك أنه إذا فشلت الحكومة في الحفاظ على هذه الحقوق أو تصرفت ضد مصالح مواطنيها، فإن للشعب الحق في الثورة وإقامة حكومة جديدة. لقد كان لهذه الثورة الفلسفية تأثير كبير ودائم على تطور الفكر السياسي الحديث، خاصة في سياق الثورات والدساتير وحقوق الإنسان وقيام الديمقراطيات الليبرالية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثورة، السلطة الأبوية، الحق الإلهي، العقد الاجتماعي، موافقة.

Abstract:

John Locke's philosophy, as argued by Graham A. J. Rogers (Oct 24, 2024), represents a pivotal shift in Enlightenment thought, emphasizing individual rights, empiricism, and the social contract (Britannica). His revolutionary ideas challenge the divine right of kings and advocate for government as a protector of life, liberty, and property. Locke's Two Treatises of Government is a foundational text in political philosophy that articulates a revolutionary framework for understanding government and individual rights. In the first treatise, Locke critiques the divine right of kings, arguing against the notion that monarchs possess inherent divine authority over their subjects. In the second treatise, Locke outlines his vision of a civil society formed through a social contract, where individuals consent to surrender some freedoms in exchange for the protection of their fundamental rights by a government. He argues that if a government fails to uphold these rights or acts against the interests of its citizens, the people have the right to revolt and establish a new government. This philosophical revolution has had a profound and lasting impact on the development of modern political thought, particularly in the context of revolutions, constitutions, human rights, and the establishment of liberal democracies.

Key Words: Revolution, Patriarcha, Divine Right, Social Contract, Consent.

Introduction**Introduction**

John Locke, the founder of liberalism, is an English civil servant, physician, and an influential political philosopher. Yahaya (2020) states that John Locke "was a multifaceted individual at one time a doctor, economist, university teacher and other times a politician and public administrator" (47). Locke, as Kelly (2022) points out was born in 1632 in Wrington, Somerset. He was deeply influenced by the English Civil War, a conflict that shaped his early worldview. His father served in the Parliamentary forces, which

helped him study in Westminster School, then in Oxford, and instilled in him a sense of the importance of governance and the complexities of power dynamics. This background was pivotal as he witnessed significant events, including the execution of Charles I while attending Westminster School.(184)

However, his exposure to medicine and natural science allowed him to forge connections with influential figures like Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury's involvement in radical politics and his opposition to Charles II and James, Duke of York, exposed Locke to the dangers of authoritarian rule and the importance of limited

government. (Kelly, 2022, p. 184). The precarious nature of Locke's political career became evident during the Exclusion Crisis when Shaftesbury's opposition to James, Duke of York, led to his fall from favour in 1675. Following this political upheaval, Locke sought refuge in France from 1675 to 1679. His return to England coincided with a brief resurgence of Shaftesbury's influence, but the subsequent uncovering of the Rye House Plot to assassinate Charles II and James forced Locke into exile in the Netherlands in 1683. This period of hiding was fraught with danger; Locke feared for his life due to his association with radical politics and his manuscript for the Two Treatises of Government, which aimed to justify the exclusion of James II from the throne and advocate for a popular right to revolution (Kelly, 2022, p. 185).

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 marked a significant turning point in English history. Prince William of Orange's successful invasion led to the overthrow of James II, allowing Locke to return to England and publish the Two Treatises anonymously due to their revolutionary implications. He played a significant role in the new government, serving as a commissioner on the Board of Trade and Plantations (Kelly, 2022, p. 185).

In conclusion, John Locke's political philosophy was profoundly shaped by his life experiences and historical context. His engagement with radical politics, his experiences in exile due to fears of persecution, and his eventual participation in the events surrounding the Glorious Revolution contributed to his development as a political thinker. Locke's Two Treatises of Government represents a revolutionary shift in political philosophy. By challenging the divine right of kings and advocating for a government based on consent and individual rights, Locke not only justified the political upheaval of his time but also laid the foundation for modern democratic principles that continue to shape democratic societies today.

Many scholars have approached Locke's political philosophy from different angles. In this study, the researcher included three of the best studies that have investigated revolution in Locke's Two Treatises of Government. A

Senior Honors Thesis entitled The Right of Revolution: An Analysis of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes' Social Contract Theories conducted by John O'Toole, published in May 2011, explores the concept of the right of revolution as articulated by two foundational political philosophers: John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. It examines how each philosopher conceptualizes the social contract and the implications of their theories for the legitimacy of governmental authority and the conditions under which citizens may justifiably revolt. This dissertation delves into the foundational concepts of social contract theory, which is crucial for the researcher's exploration of Locke. O'Toole's insights can deepen my understanding of how Locke's ideas fit within the broader philosophical landscape of his time. Additionally, it may provide historical context regarding the political turmoil during Locke's life, such as the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. This context is essential for understanding the motivations behind Locke's arguments in Two Treatises of Government. Furthermore, this dissertation clarifies key concepts such as natural rights, the legitimacy of government, and the conditions for justified rebellion which is vital as the researcher analyzes Locke's arguments and their implications for revolutionary thought.

A research paper entitled The Call for a World Constitutional Convention: An Application of John Locke's Theory of Revolution, conducted by David W. Felder, was published in 1998. It outlines the fundamental principles of John Locke's political philosophy, particularly his views on natural rights, the social contract, and the right of revolution, highlighting Locke's emphasis that governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed. It further explores the implications of Locke's theories for contemporary governance and the idea of a global constitutional framework. This can help me frame my analysis of Two Treatises of Government in a contemporary context. Incorporating insights from Felder's paper into the current research provides the researcher with a broader understanding of how Locke's revolutionary philosophy can be applied today, enriching my analysis of the Two Treatises of Government and

demonstrating its continued relevance in addressing contemporary political issues.

Another study is chapter 6 entitled Locke - Liberalism and the Externalization of Conflict of the book Conflict, from Paul Kelly's book Conflict, War and Revolution: The Problem of Politics in International Political Thought, published in 2022. In this chapter, Paul Kelly examines John Locke's contributions to liberal thought, particularly in relation to conflict and its externalization. Kelly outlines how Locke's philosophy emphasizes individual rights and the importance of property, which are foundational to liberalism. He argues that Locke's view of the state is rooted in the protection of these rights. The chapter further explores how Locke's government is meant to resolve conflicts and maintain order, but it also raises questions about its effectiveness in dealing with conflicts that extend beyond national borders. Incorporating insights from Paul Kelly's chapter into the current study provides a nuanced understanding of Locke's philosophy as it relates to conflict and revolution. This enriches the researcher's analysis of Two Treatises of Government by situating Locke's ideas within broader discussions about liberalism, individual rights, and the complexities of human conflict in both historical and contemporary contexts .

Statement of the Problem

The present research paper is carried out to investigate how revolution is portrayed in the philosophy of John Locke, particularly the Two Treatises of Government. By examining Locke's ideas on natural rights, social contract, and the historical context that contributed to shaping Locke's philosophy, the study aspires to provide a comprehensive understanding of Locke's contributions to political thought and their lasting impact on contemporary society. More specifically the study seeks to achieve the following objectives, it intends to:

- Investigate the historical and social conditions of 17th-century England that influenced Locke's thought, including the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution .
- Examine Locke's core ideas, such as natural rights and the social contract to understand their significance in political philosophy .

- Evaluate how Locke's theories have shaped modern democratic governance, constitutional law, and human rights discourses.

Significance of the Research

The significance of the research titled Revolution in the Philosophy of John Locke: Two Treatises of Government lies in its critical examination of Locke's foundational contributions to modern political thought and the enduring impact of his ideas on contemporary governance and individual rights. By analyzing Locke's arguments regarding natural rights, the social contract, and the role of government, this research illuminates how Locke's philosophy not only challenged prevailing notions of authority in the 17th century but also laid the groundwork for liberal democracy. Furthermore, by situating Locke within his historical context and exploring his influence on subsequent political movements and documents, the study underscores the revolutionary nature of his ideas and their relevance in addressing current debates surrounding liberty, justice, and the relationship between citizens and the state. Ultimately, this research aims to foster a deeper understanding of Locke's legacy and its implications for contemporary society.

Scope of the Research

The research entitled Revolution in the Philosophy of John Locke: Two Treatises of Government is subject to certain limitations and scope constraints that must be acknowledged. Primarily, the focus is narrowed to Locke's political philosophy as articulated in his Two Treatises of Government, which may overlook other significant aspects of his work, such as his theories on epistemology and personal identity. Additionally, while the research aims to analyze Locke's influence on modern political thought, it may not encompass the full spectrum of reactions to his ideas across different cultures and historical contexts. Furthermore, the analysis is confined to a specific timeframe, limiting the exploration of how contemporary events and issues might reinterpret or challenge Locke's principles. These constraints underscore the need for further interdisciplinary studies that can

provide a more holistic view of Locke's philosophy and its implications in today's world .

Definitions of the Terms

- 1 .Divine Rights: Divine right refers to the belief that monarchs derive their authority directly from God, rather than being accountable to the people or any earthly authority (Burgess, 1992, p. 837). Locke, in the First Treatise of Government, critiques this notion, arguing that political power should not be based on divine sanction but rather on the consent of the governed. "Scripture or reason, I am sure, do not anywhere say so, notwithstanding the noise of divine right, as if divine authority hath subjected us to the unlimited will of another.(4 §) ”
- 2 .Natural Rights: Natural rights, according to Locke, are fundamental rights inherent to all individuals by virtue of being human. These rights include life, liberty, and property. The preservation of these natural rights is a primary purpose of government; thus, any legitimate government must protect and uphold these rights. If a government fails to do so, Locke argues that citizens have the right to revolt against it.
- 3 .Social Contract: The social contract is a theoretical agreement among individuals to form a society and establish a government to protect their natural rights—namely, life, liberty, and property (Dienstag, 1996, p. 988). According to Locke, this contract is based on the idea that legitimate political authority arises from the consent of the governed. If a government violates this contract by failing to protect the rights of its citizens or acting against their interests, the people have the right to withdraw their consent and establish a new government.

Methodology

In the current research paper entitled Revolution in the Philosophy of John Locke: Two Treatises of Government, the researcher employs a qualitative analytical method, focusing on textual analysis and historical contextualization. This approach involves a close reading of Locke's seminal work, examining key themes

such as natural rights, the social contract, and government legitimacy. The study also tends to explore the historical context in which Locke wrote the Two Treatises of Government, including the political upheavals of 17th-century England, to understand how these influences shaped his philosophy. By synthesizing primary texts with secondary scholarly interpretations, the researcher elucidates the revolutionary aspects of Locke's thought and its enduring impact on modern political theory. This method enables a comprehensive understanding of Locke's contributions to Enlightenment philosophy and their implications for contemporary governance.

The Two Treatises of Government

Locke's ideas about revolution were revolutionary in his time, especially the Two Treatises of Government, as they challenged the traditional view of the divine right of monarchs, who claimed to rule by divine right and the idea that governments were absolute and could not be questioned. As stated in the Complete Works of John Locke (2017), “these two famous treatises was first published anonymously in December 1689 as a refutation of Robert Filmer’s Patriarcha, a 1680 book that provides a theory of absolute monarchy and the divine right of kings” (1016). The doctrine of the divine right was prevalent at the time, stating that kings were God’s appointed rulers on earth, and that challenging their authority was seen as challenging God’s will. Burgess (1992) argues that “the State of MONARCHIE is the supremist thing upon earth: For Kings are not only GODS Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon GODS throne, but even by GOD himself they are called Gods” (837). Rahman (2024) nearly expresses the same idea, “kings were seen as divinely chosen figures, wielding not only secular power but also a spiritual influence that made them almost sacred .(609) ”

In the First Treatise of Government, Locke critiques the divine right of kings’ theory, which argues that monarchs derive their power directly from God. He introduces the First Treatise as a refutation of the idea that absolute monarchy is based on divine right. “The First of the Treatises attacks patriarchalism in the form of a sentence-by-sentence refutation of

[Robert] Filmer's Patriarcha. Locke proceeds through Filmer's arguments, contesting his proofs from Scripture and ridiculing them as senseless, until concluding that no government can be justified by an appeal to the divine right of kings" (Locke, 2017, p. 1016). For challenging monarchs' claim of divine right, Rosalie Cole (1991) argues that "Locke's challenge to traditional absolutism arises in part from the Protestant notion that each individual has a direct relation to God. Hence, no political intermediary (i.e. a king or monarch) is necessary. God gives man free will to form his own civil society" (18). It should be noted that there are also several factors that prompt Locke to challenge Monarchs' alleged divine right to rule including natural rights philosophy, social contract theory, and other historical events such as the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution. These factors together create a solid framework for Locke's arguments against absolute monarchy.

In the Second Treatise, Locke presents his alternative view of government and authority, which is based on the natural rights and the social contract. Locke argues that individuals possess inherent rights to life, liberty, and property, which are not granted by any ruler but are intrinsic to human nature. "MEN being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent" (Locke, 2017, para. § 95). According to Locke, legitimate political authority arises not from divine right but from the consent of the governed. "That the beginning of politic society depends upon the consent of the individuals, to join into, and make one society; who, when they are thus incorporated, might set up what form of government they thought fit" (§ 106). This means that citizens give up some freedoms in exchange for the government protecting their natural rights – life, liberty, and property. However, for Locke, if the government fails in this duty, the people have the right to withdraw their consent and overthrow it. "there remains still in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them" (§ 149) This idea was highly influential

in revolutions like the American Revolution and the French Revolution .

The First Treatise of Government

In the First Treatise of Government, Locke engages in a philosophical critique of Robert Filmer's arguments in Patriarcha, which arguably claimed for a hereditary ruler with God-given authority, defending the idea of absolute monarchy based on biblical patriarchal authority. Locke categorically denies the idea of divine right monarchy, which asserts that rulers derive their authority directly from God, arguing that neither scripture nor reason would approve of subjecting us to the absolute domination of another. "Scripture or reason, I am sure, do not anywhere say so, notwithstanding the noise of divine right, as if divine authority hath subjected us to the unlimited will of another" (Locke, 2017, para. § 4). Locke states that he is specifically addressing Filmer's claim of Adam's sovereignty, which is based on three foundations; "God's creation of Adam, the dominion he gave him over Eve, and the dominion he had as a father over his children: all which I shall particularly consider" (§ 14). These foundations form the sum of all of Filmer's arguments regarding Adam's sovereignty. Locke starts this treatise by introducing Filmer's position in Patriarcha, which asserts that humans are not born free because they live in complete subjugation to their parents, and thus they cannot choose their rulers or forms of government. "SIR Robert Filmer's great position is, that men are not naturally free. This is the foundation on which his absolute monarchy stands, and from which it erects itself to a height, that its power is above every power" (Locke, 2017, para. § 6). This belief prompts Filmer to argue that since people are inherently subjugated, monarchs possess absolute power by divine right .

To prove his claim, Filmer introduces the concept of "fatherly authority". Locke summarizes Filmer's central argument that men are born into subjection to their parents, which he equates with royal authority. "to prove this grand position of his, he tells us. Men are born in subjection to their parents, and therefore, cannot be free. And this authority of parents, he calls royal authority, 14. Fatherly authority,

right of fatherhood, 20" (§ 6). Locke critiques this view, questioning why Filmer does not clearly define what "fatherly authority" means, especially since he claims it is unlimited. 'Have told us expressly, what that fatherly authority is, have defined it, though not limited it, because, in some other treatises of his, he tells us, it is unlimited and unlimitable" (§ 6). This lack of clarity weakens Filmer's argument for absolute monarchy, as it leaves open the question of the nature and limits of parental power.

Then Filmer moves to confirm that the authority of kings is derived from the patriarchal power of Adam and his descendants. He argues that Adam, as the first man, was granted a unique authority over the world and that this power was inherited by subsequent patriarchs. This establishes a direct lineage of authority from Adam to kings, suggesting that monarchs possess divine rights akin to parental rights. "This lordship which Adam by command had over the whole world, and by right descending from him the patriarchs did enjoy, was as large and ample as the absolute dominion of any monarch, which hath been since the creation" (Locke, 2017, para. § 8). Filmer stresses that Adam and the patriarchs held absolute power—specifically, the power of life and death, the ability to make war and peace. "Dominion of life and death, making war and concluding peace. Adam and the patriarchs had absolute power of life and death. Kings, in the right of parents, succeed to the exercise of supreme jurisdiction" (§ 8). Filmer asserts that because kings inherit their authority from this divine lineage, they are above the law. This notion implies that kings are not accountable to anyone except God, reinforcing their absolute power. "As kingly power is by the law of God, so it hath no inferior law to limit it; Adam was lord of all. The father of a family governs by no other law, than by his own will. The superiority of princes is above laws" (§ 8). To reinforce these points, Filmer claims that a perfect monarchy is one where the king is free from any legal constraints. "A perfect kingdom is that wherein the king rules all things according to his own will. (8 §) "

In opposition to Filmer's ideas, Locke, though acknowledges that parents have authority over

their children, contends that this familial authority does not translate into political dominion. The moral obligations children owe to their parents do not justify absolute political power. For opposing the absolute rule of kings, "In opposition, therefore, to our author's doctrine, that Adam was monarch of the whole world, founded on this place, I shall shew, That by this grant, i. Gen. 28. God gave no immediate power to Adam over men, over his children, over those of his own species; and so, he was not made ruler, or monarch, by this charter" (Locke, 2017, para. § 24). Locke also emphasizes that Adam's authority was not automatically passed on to his descendants. Locke argues that Adam did not have the power to grant absolute dominion to his children without explicit consent. "Our author tells us in the words of Mr. Selden, that Adam by the donation from God, Gen. i. 28. was made the general lord of all things, not without such a private dominion to himself, as without his grant did exclude his children" (§ 21). Therefore, the claim that kings inherit authority from Adam is flawed. Locke concludes, "that by this grant God gave him not private dominion over the inferior creatures, but right in common with all mankind; so, neither was he monarch, upon the account of the property here given him" (§ 24). This critique not only challenges Filmer's arguments but also contributes significantly to Enlightenment thought, influencing modern democratic principles and theories of government .

In Chapter III, Locke challenges Filmer's allegation that Adam's title to sovereignty by creation. Locke starts by summarizing Filmer's position that Adam was appointed monarch at creation, even without subjects. Filmer argues that Adam had a natural right to govern his descendants. "But let us see, how he puts his creation and this appointment together. By the appointment of God, says Sir Robert, as soon as Adam was created, he was monarch of the world, though he had no subjects; for though there could not be actual government till there were subjects" (Locke, 2017, para. § 16). Locke critiques this notion by pointing out the contradiction; if there were no subjects, then there could be no actual governance. He emphasizes that Filmer himself acknowledges

the absence of subjects at the time of Adam's creation. "But he could not de facto be by providence constituted the governor of the world, at a time when there was actually no government, no subjects to be governed, which our author here confesses" (§ 16). Therefore, it is impossible for Adam to have been established as a governor or monarch when there was no one to govern. This point further undermines Filmer's argument about divine appointment. Filmer had foreseen this criticism, arguing that though Adam was not a father at the time of his creation and thus not a monarch in reality, he was still a monarch "in habit". "Yet by the right of nature, it was due to Adam to be governor of his posterity: though not in act, yet at least in habit, Adam was a king from his creation" (§ 16). The idea that Adam was a king "in habit" but not in practice is seen as an illogical claim by Locke. Locke mockingly counters that Filmer must have been an author "in habit" before even he wrote a book. "And thus, Sir Robert was an author before he writ his book; not in act it is true, but in habit" (§ 18) Locke's response highlights the absurdity of Filmer's argument using irony. By suggesting that Filmer's claim about Adam being a monarch "in habit" is as nonsensical as claiming someone is an author without writing even a pamphlet.

Locke concludes by identifying two key falsehoods in Filmer's argument; firstly, the timing of God's grant. Locke points out that while Genesis 1:28 follows Adam's creation in the text "first, It is false that God made that grant to Adam, as soon as he was created, since, tho' it stands in the text immediately after his creation, yet it is plain it could not be spoken to Adam, till after Eve was made and brought to him: and how then could he be monarch by appointment as soon as created" (§ 16). Therefore, claiming that Adam was appointed monarch immediately upon creation is misleading. The second falsehood is that divine appointment contradicts natural rights. "Secondly, were it true that God's actual donation appointed Adam monarch of the world as soon as he was created, yet the reason here given for it would not prove it; but it would always be a false inference, that God, by a positive donation, appointed Adam monarch of the world, because, by right of nature, it was

due to Adam to be governor of his posterity" (§ 16). Locke says that if Adam inherently had the right to govern due to nature, then a positive divine appointment would be redundant. By emphasizing natural rights over divine appointment, Locke lays the groundwork for his political philosophy that values individual rights and consent as the foundation of legitimate government.

In Chapter V, Locke focuses on rebutting Filmer's claim that Adam was entitled to authority due to the subjection of Eve. Locke refers to Genesis 3:16, where God speaks to Eve after the Fall, suggesting a dynamic of desire and rule between husband and wife. "THE next place of scripture we find our author builds his monarchy of Adam on, is iii. Gen. 26. And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Locke, 2017, para. § 44). Locke challenges Filmer's interpretation by arguing that this verse does not establish Adam as a monarch or imply a system of governance. Instead, it addresses the relationship between a husband and wife. The phrase "he shall rule over thee" is descriptive of marital dynamics rather than prescriptive of political authority. Locke implies that using this scripture to justify monarchical power is a misapplication. Locke then turns to critique Filmer's way of writing. He points out that Filmer's reasoning regarding Adam's sovereignty is convoluted and difficult to follow. "If anyone will but carefully read our author's own reasoning from these words, Observations, 244" (§ 44). He suggests that upon closer examination, Filmer's arguments lack clarity and coherence. He also acknowledges that Filmer has a unique writing style, which may contribute to the confusion. "And consider, among other things, the line and posterity of Adam, as he there brings them in, he finds some difficulty to make sense of what he says; but we allows this at present to his peculiar way of writing, and consider the force of the text in hand" (§ 44). Locke argues that at the time of Adam's creation, God was not in a position to grant privileges or favors because humanity had just sinned (the Fall). "This was not a time when Adam could expect any favours, any grant of privileges, from his offended Maker. This context undermines the idea that Adam could have received a legitimate grant of sovereignty from God.

Locke further ridicules Filmer's argument that this would make Adam a "poor monarch". "whatever Sir Robert would have him, it is plain, God made him but a very poor monarch, such a one, as our author himself would have counted it no great privilege to be" (§ 45). Through these arguments, Locke critiques Sir Robert Filmer's arguments regarding the divine right of kings and the legitimacy of Adam's sovereignty over Eve and their descendants, suggesting that such claims are not inherently justified or logical.

In Chapter VI, Locke also addresses Filmer's assertion that a father's natural right over his children grants him sovereign authority. "THERE is one thing more, and then I think I have given you all that our author brings for proof of Adam's sovereignty, and that is a supposition of a natural right of dominion over his children, by being their father" (Locke, 2017, para. § 50). Locke critiques this idea, suggesting that Filmer overemphasizes the concept of fatherhood as a source of royal authority. This perspective implies that all rulers derive their power from familial relationships, which Locke finds flawed. "This title of fatherhood he is so pleased with, that you find it brought in almost in every page; particularly he says, not only Adam, but the succeeding patriarchs had by right of fatherhood royal authority over their children. And in the same page, this subjection of children being the fountain of all regal authority, &c. (50 §)".

Locke then moves on to challenge the idea that Adam's creation grants him dominion over his descendants. "[Natural dominion] so that Adam is the only man created, and all ever since being begotten, nobody has been born free. If we ask how Adam comes by this power over his children, he tells us here it is by begetting them: and so again, Observations, 223" (§ 50). Locke points out that if Adam's power over his children is based solely on begetting them, then it implies that no one is born free, which contradicts the principle of natural rights and freedom. Thus, Locke confidently opposes Filmer's view that fatherhood creates a form of slavery for children. He argues that the act of begetting does not diminish the freedom of individuals; rather, it affirms their inherent

liberty. "And then I may without presumption oppose my single opinion to his; and be confident that my saying, that begetting of children makes them not slaves to their fathers, as certainly sets all mankind free, as his affirming the contrary makes them all slaves" (§ 51). Locke's stance regarding this point is that all humans are born free and should remain so. He critiques the notion that fathers have absolute power over their children simply because they gave them life. "I answer, that everyone who gives another anything, has not always thereby a right to take it away again" (§ 52). Locke here emphasizes the moral implications of such authority. Locke asserts that the rights of parents, as established by nature and reinforced by the Fifth Commandment "Honor thy father and mother", do not equate to political dominion. He asserts that political authority is distinct from familial relationships. "The right therefore which parents have by nature, and which is confirmed to them by the 5th commandment, cannot be that political dominion, which our author would derive from it: for that being in every civil society supreme somewhere, can discharge any subject from any political obedience to any one of his fellow subjects" (§ 64). Thus, Locke counters Filmer's idea concerning children honouring their parents by affirming that honouring parents does not mean granting them absolute sovereignty but refers to a moral obligation rather than a political one. This duty exists independently of any political authority, suggesting that parents do not possess sovereignty over their children. (66 §)

In Conclusion, Locke's critique of Filmer's arguments represents a significant philosophical shift towards modern democratic principles. By rejecting the idea that kings inherit their authority through a divine lineage, Locke lays the groundwork for a political theory based on individual rights, consent, and accountability. This perspective would profoundly influence later democratic thought and the development of constitutional governments, emphasizing the importance of limiting governmental power in favour of protecting individual freedoms and laying the groundwork for modern political philosophy and democratic governance.

The Second Treatise of Government

John Locke's Second Treatise of Government is a foundational text in political philosophy, in which Locke introduces his ideas for a legitimate government based on natural rights and a social contract. As stated in the Complete Works of John Locke (2017), "the Second Treatise outlines Locke's ideas for a more civilized society based on natural rights and contract theory" (1016). Within the Second Treatise, Locke lays the groundwork for the right of revolution under certain circumstances. He argues for a social contract between the government and the governed. If the government breaks this contract by violating the people's natural rights (life, liberty, property) or acting tyrannically, then the people have the right to overthrow that government. According to O'Toole (2012), "Locke's Second Treatise of Government, it is here that the most explicit investigations into the right of revolution can be found" (5). O'Toole (2012) also states that "John Locke's Second Treatise of Government was used as a justification for revolution in the late seventeenth century. His work was to be utilized as a means by which resistance to the sovereign could be found reasonable. It is this notion of conditional government that made Locke's work so infamous. (49) "

Locke starts this treatise by discussing the nature of political power, defining it as an authority that creates laws, enforces penalties, regulates property, and protects the public good, emphasizing that legitimate power must be derived from the consent of the governed. "Political power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently, all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and the in defense of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good" (Locke, 2017, para. § 3). Here Locke is challenging the divine right of kings and authoritarian rule by asserting that political power must serve the public interest, laying the groundwork for a new way of governance. This new way of governance is based on a solid philosophy that derives its principles from the natural rights of

men. Locke asserts that to comprehend political power correctly, one must recognize the state, in which all men naturally exist – a state characterized by perfect freedom and equality. He states, "To understand political power right, and derive it from its original, we must consider, what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man" (§ 4). This assertion emphasizes that individuals possess inherent rights that exist prior to and independent of governmental authority. The concept of natural freedom directly opposes feudal hierarchies and absolute monarchies, promoting individual rights and autonomy, which were radical ideas at the time .

Locke further elaborates on this idea by emphasizing that all individuals are born equal and should have equal power and jurisdiction. He argues that "a state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another; there being nothing more evident, than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection" (§ 4). This assertion reinforces the notion that no individual is inherently superior to another, establishing a moral basis for equality that challenges hierarchical structures prevalent in Locke's time. However, Locke is careful to delineate the boundaries of this freedom. He notes, "but though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of license: though the man in that state has an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it" (§ 5). This introduces the notion of responsible liberty; while individuals are free, their actions must align with the law of nature—a moral framework that governs human behaviour. This law obligates everyone to respect the rights of others, ensuring that freedom does not devolve into chaos .

For Locke, in the state of nature where there are no laws or authority, men are guided by reason. "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions" (§ 6). Ultimately, Locke concludes that all men remain in their natural state until they consent to form a political society. He writes, "but I moreover affirm, that all men are naturally in that state, and remain so, till by their own consents they make themselves members of some politic society" (§ 15). This consent is foundational to Locke's political philosophy; it signifies that legitimate government arises from the collective agreement of individuals who seek to protect their natural rights through established laws and institutions, excluding coercion or divine right.

Then Locke turns to talk about the transition from the state of nature to organized political societies. Central to Locke's argument is the idea that individuals possess natural rights and that the formation of a political society is essential for the protection and preservation of these rights. Locke asserts that "no political society can be, nor subsist, without having in itself the power to preserve the property, and in order thereunto, punish the offences of all those of that society; there, and there only is political society, where every one of the members hath quitted this natural power, resigned it up into the hands of the community in all cases that exclude him not from appealing for protection to the law established by it" (Locke, 2017, para. § 87). Locke also argues that the transition to civil society occurs when individuals collectively agree to form a government that can enact laws and impose penalties for transgressions. He explains, "And thus the common-wealth comes by a power to set down what punishment belongs to the several transgressions which they think worthy of it, . . . and all this for the preservation of the property of all the members of that society, as far as is possible" (§ 88). Here, Locke emphasizes that the primary purpose of government is to protect property and ensure justice, thus legitimizing its authority. However, Locke strongly asserts

that any legitimate political authority must arise from the consent of the governed. He asserts, "MEN being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent" (§ 95). This foundational principle establishes that the transition from a state of nature to civil society is contingent upon mutual agreement among individuals .

Thus, the crux of Locke's political philosophy is that the inception of any political society is rooted in the consent of its members. He asserts, "and thus that, which begins and actually constitutes any political society, is nothing but the consent of any number of freemen capable of a majority to unite and incorporate into such a society" (§ 99). This perspective challenges any form of government that does not derive its legitimacy from the explicit consent of its citizens. The concept of forming a political society through collective agreement challenges existing hierarchies and promotes the idea of popular sovereignty, where the legitimacy of government comes from the people rather than divine right or hereditary rule. These ideas signify a shift from individualistic justice to a collective legal framework, emphasizing that legitimate political authority arises from the consent of individuals who agree to abide by common laws for mutual protection. It challenges the notion of arbitrary rule and supports the idea of a social contract.

Moreover, Locke emphasizes that this consent is not merely a formality but a fundamental requirement for establishing lawful governance. He states, "that the beginning of politic society depends upon the consent of the individuals, to join into, and make one society; who, when they are thus incorporated, might set up what form of government they thought fit" (Locke, 2017, para. § 100). This flexibility allows communities to choose governance structures that best serve their needs while remaining anchored in the consent of the majority. Once individuals consent to form a community, they create a political body governed by the will of the majority. Locke states, "when any number of men have so consented to make one community or

government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make one body politic, wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest" (§ 95). This incorporation is essential for establishing a cohesive society where decisions are made collectively rather than individually. This reinforces the idea of popular sovereignty, where the authority of the government is derived from the consent of the governed. It undermines autocratic rule and supports the notion that political legitimacy comes from collective agreement rather than coercion.

Finally, Locke addresses the significance of individual consent concerning the subjection under governmental laws. He notes, "Every man being, as has been showed, naturally free, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any earthly power, but only his own consent; it is to be considered, what shall be understood to be a sufficient declaration of a man's consent, to make him subject to the laws of any government" (§ 119). This statement reinforces his belief that true political authority cannot exist without the explicit approval of those it governs which form the basis of social contract theory. This is a radical departure from authoritarian rule towards a more democratic rule, encouraging accountability in governance and legitimizing the call for reform or revolution when governments fail to serve their people. Still, the ultimate purpose of individuals entering into a political society is the preservation of their property. "The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealth, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. To which in the state of nature there are many things wanting.(124 §) "

As governments derive their legitimacy from the explicit consent of the governed, the governed retain the right to withdraw that consent, subduing their government to accountability or dissolution. Locke argues that legitimate government is founded on the consent of the governed, and when that consent is violated, the people have the right to dissolve their government and establish a new one. He identifies several scenarios that lead to the dissolution of government. He asserts, "first, that when such a single person, or prince, sets up his own arbitrary will in place of the laws,

which are the will of the society, declared by the legislative, then the legislative is changed" (Locke, 2017, para. § 214). This statement underscores the danger of autocratic rule, where a ruler prioritizes personal whims over the collective will of the society. When a prince or ruler disregards established laws, the very foundation of governance is undermined, leading to a shift in authority that justifies rebellion. Moreover, Locke emphasizes the importance of legislative assembly and action. He states, "secondly, When the prince hinders the legislative from assembling in its due time, or from acting freely, pursuant to those ends for which it was constituted" (§ 215). The obstruction of legislative processes by rulers not only disrupts governance but also betrays the trust placed in them to act for the public good. Such actions diminish the legitimacy of authority and empower citizens to reclaim their rights. Locke further elaborates on electoral integrity, noting that "thirdly, When, by the arbitrary power of the prince, the electors, or ways of election, are altered, without the consent, and contrary to the common interest of the people" (§ 216). The manipulation of electoral processes is a direct assault on democracy and representation. When rulers alter how representatives are chosen without public consent, they effectively nullify the people's voice and right to self-governance. Another critical point Locke makes is regarding foreign subjugation: "Fourthly, The delivery also of the people into the subjection of a foreign power, either by the prince, or by the legislative, is certainly a change of the legislative, and so a dissolution of the government: for the end why people entered into society being to be preserved one entire, free, independent society, to be governed by its own laws; this is lost, whenever they are given up into the power of another" (§ 217). This assertion highlights a fundamental principle of sovereignty; any government that compromises its autonomy by submitting to foreign rule has betrayed its citizens' trust and purpose.

Locke also addresses instances where governmental authority acts contrary to its foundational trust: "There is, therefore, secondly, another way whereby governments are dissolved, and that is, when the legislative, or the prince, either of them, act contrary to

their trust. First, the legislative acts against the trust reposed in them, when they endeavour to invade the property of the subject and to make themselves, or any part of the community, masters, or arbitrary disposers of the lives, liberties, or fortunes of the people" (§ 221). Here, Locke emphasizes that any attempt by government officials to infringe upon individual rights—be it life, liberty, or property—constitutes a breach of trust that justifies dissolution. When such violations occur, Locke argues that "In these and the like cases, when the government is dissolved, the people are at liberty to provide for themselves, by erecting a new legislative, differing from the other, by the change of persons, or form, or both, as they shall find it most for their safety and good" (§ 220). This radical notion empowers citizens to act against tyranny and injustice. The authority to establish a new government reflects Locke's belief in popular sovereignty and individual rights.

Locke asserts that the legitimacy of government is derived from the consent of the governed, and he outlines the conditions under which this consent can be revoked. Central to his argument is the idea that when governments fail to protect the rights of their citizens, particularly their property, they forfeit their authority and can be justly opposed. Therefore, Locke asserts that the primary purpose of government is to safeguard the property and rights of individuals. He states, "whenever the legislators endeavour to take away, and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any farther obedience" (§ 222). This declaration underscores Locke's belief that the protection of property is not just a political obligation but a moral imperative. When legislators overstep their bounds and infringe upon the rights of the people, they effectively declare war on them, thus justifying resistance and revolution.

Moreover, Locke emphasizes that any breach of trust by the legislative body—whether through ambition, fear, folly, or corruption—results in a forfeiture of power. He writes, "whenever, therefore, the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society; and

either by ambition, fear, folly or corruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people; by this breach of trust, they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary ends" (Locke, 2017, para. § 222). This passage illustrates Locke's view that government is a fiduciary relationship; those in power must act in accordance with the interests of those they govern. When this trust is broken, it is not only the right but also the duty of the people to reclaim their liberty. Locke further clarifies what happens when government fails its fundamental purpose: "What power they ought to have in the society, who thus employ it contrary to the trust went along with it in its first institution, is easy to determine; and one cannot but see, that he, who has once attempted any such thing as this, cannot any longer be trusted" (§ 222). This statement reinforces the notion that once a ruler abuses their power, they lose their legitimacy and cannot expect continued obedience from the populace. Thus, Locke warns that when people are subjected to arbitrary power and become miserable under such conditions, they seek to relieve themselves of their burdens. He notes, "for when the people are made miserable, and find themselves exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power...the same happens. The people generally ill-treated...can be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits heavily upon them" (§ 224). This observation highlights the inevitability of resistance in the face of oppression; when individuals feel their rights are consistently violated, they seek change. Locke also discusses the moral implications of rebellion against a corrupt government, holding it responsible for the occurrence of rebellion. He states, "when either the legislative is changed, or the legislators act contrary to the end for which they were constituted; those who are guilty are guilty of rebellion" (§ 227). This distinction is crucial: while rebellion may be deemed unlawful in some contexts, it becomes a justified response when a government acts against its foundational purpose—namely, to protect the rights and properties of its citizens. In conclusion, John Locke's Second Treatise of Government presents a compelling framework

for understanding the foundations of political authority and the rights of individuals within society. His emphasis on natural rights—life, liberty, and property—establishes a moral basis for governance, asserting that these rights are inherent and cannot be surrendered. The concept of the social contract further reinforces this idea, as Locke argues that legitimate government derives its authority from the consent of the governed. This consent is not a one-time event but an ongoing agreement that can be revoked if the government fails to uphold its responsibilities. Ultimately, Locke's ideas about natural rights, consent, and the right to revolution advocate for a government that is accountable to its citizens. They provide a philosophical foundation for democratic principles and underscore the importance of protecting individual freedoms against tyranny. In this light, Locke's treatise remains a vital reference in discussions about justice, governance, and the ethical responsibilities of both rulers and the ruled.

The Impact of Locke's Philosophy on the Development of Political Theory & Practice

John Locke (1632-1704) is an influential English philosopher and physician, often regarded as one of the most important thinkers of the Enlightenment. John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* has had a profound and enduring impact on the development of modern political theory, particularly in the context of revolutions, constitutions, human rights, and the establishment of liberal democracies. It also continues to shape contemporary political discourse. By refuting Sir Robert Filmer's arguments for the divine right of kings, Locke established a new paradigm for understanding political authority. This shift away from monarchic absolutism towards a more egalitarian view of governance marked a significant transformation in political thought. His ideas, particularly those concerning natural rights, the social contract, and the right of revolution, had a major impact on the development of modern liberal democracies and laid the groundwork for later revolutions, such as the American and French Revolutions, which were inspired by Locke's justification for revolution when a government fails to uphold its responsibilities and the

legitimacy of resisting and overthrowing oppressive governments.

Kasper (2005) highlights the significance of Locke's ideas in shaping the Glorious Revolution. He asserts that "his long-held ideas, when they were published in essays and pamphlets, gave philosophical depth to the Glorious Revolution and a cohesive intellectual base to constitutional, limited government, parliamentary representation and the market economy" (2). This intellectual foundation not only influenced British governance but also made its way across the Atlantic, where Locke's principles were integral to the American struggle for independence. The American Founding Fathers were particularly influenced by Locke's theories on governance and individual rights. O'Toole (2012) notes that "the American Founding Fathers, including James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, inherited Locke's perspective on [the right of the revolution] when arguing for the independence of the colonies" (3). This inheritance is evident in the Declaration of Independence, which embodies Locke's principles by asserting that "when a long train of abuses" occurs, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish their government. O'Toole (2012) further emphasizes that "The Declaration of Independence, a clear, concise document explicitly outlining the right of revolution, resonates very much with Locke's political theory" (5). Locke's influence extends beyond mere rhetoric; it is deeply embedded in the structure of American government. The Bill of Rights reflects a desire to limit governmental power and protect individual liberties. O'Toole (2012) points out that the Fourth Amendment explicitly safeguards "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures" (106). This emphasis on privacy and security illustrates Locke's belief in the importance of protecting individual rights against potential governmental overreach. Moreover, O'Toole (2012) argues that "The Federalist Papers, The Declaration of Independence, and The Bill of Rights all demonstrate a Hobbesian and Lockean perspective on the role of the sovereign and the right of revolution" (107). The Federalist Papers, particularly those authored by

Madison, illuminate how the Founding Fathers understood the need for limitations on governmental power. As O'Toole articulates, "the sovereign, as a man, cannot be fully trusted, and thus certain limitations must be installed to help ensure that the government does not become tyrannical" (107). This notion of checks and balances reflects Locke's understanding of human nature and governance. Kasper also notes that Locke's classical liberal thought remains relevant today. He states that "in our day, the core pillars of Locke's classical liberal thought – equality before the law, constitutional, small government, and free markets built on secure property – are increasingly embraced by young third-world observers" (O'Toole, 2012, p. 4). This ongoing relevance underscores Locke's enduring legacy in promoting individual freedom and democratic governance across the globe.

In conclusion, John Locke's political philosophy not only revolutionized political thought in his time but has had a lasting impact on political theory and practice, constituting a solid foundation for modern democratic principles. His ideas provided a philosophical foundation for revolutions, shaped constitutions, and provided a framework for understanding the relationship between individuals and their governments. As seen in foundational American documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, Locke's principles remain vital in understanding the relationship between citizens and their government. His assertion that individuals have the right to life, liberty, and property continues to resonate as a fundamental tenet of democratic societies worldwide.

Conclusion

John Locke's the Two Treatises of Government represents a significant shift in political thought, as it challenges the prevailing notions of divine right and absolute monarchy and offers a compelling justification for limited government, individual rights, and popular sovereignty. The doctrine of divine right asserts that monarchs derive their authority directly from God. Kings were seen as God's representatives on earth, and their power was

absolute and unquestionable. Any challenge to their authority was considered a challenge to God's will. In contrast, Locke argued that individuals possess natural rights, including life, liberty, and property. These rights are inherent to all humans and cannot be bestowed or taken away by any earthly power. To protect these rights, individuals form a social contract, voluntarily ceding some of their rights to a government. However, this government is not divinely ordained; it is a creation of the people themselves. By transferring the legitimacy of government from the divine right (God) to the consent of the governed, Locke is explicitly empowering the people to shape their own political governance and hold their leaders accountable, laying the groundwork for revolution when the government becomes tyrannical or fails to fulfill its obligations and violates the rights of its citizens. This revolutionary shift in political thought marked a departure from traditional, monarchical authority and paved the way for modern democratic principles.

Locke's explicit justification for revolution was a radical departure from the traditional divine right of kings. It provided a powerful theoretical framework for challenging oppressive regimes and inspired revolutionary movements around the world. Thus, Locke's justification for revolution is not merely practical; it is also moral. He believes that individuals have a moral obligation to protect their rights and those of others. He argues that if a government fails to fulfill its obligations and violates the rights of its citizens, the people have a right to revolt and establish a new government. If peaceful means of redress fail, then revolution becomes a necessary act of self-defense against tyranny. However, it's important to note that Locke's justification for revolution is conditional. He emphasizes the importance of prudence and moderation in resorting to revolution. He recognizes that revolution can be a dangerous and disruptive process, and it should only be undertaken as a last resort. Thus, he lays three main conditions for a legitimate revolution. First, the government must become tyrannical, abusing its power and violating the people's rights. Second, the government must fail to protect the

people's natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Third, revolution should only be considered as a last resort, when all other avenues for redress have been exhausted.

Recommendations for Future Studies

As this research paper has explored the intricate relationship between John Locke's philosophy and the foundational principles of modern democratic thought, it is essential to recognize the vast landscape of inquiry that remains. While the analysis of *The Two Treatises of Government* has illuminated key aspects of Locke's ideas on natural rights and the social contract, further exploration is warranted to deepen our understanding of their implications in contemporary contexts. Thus, the researcher recommends the following topics for future scholars to contribute to a more nuanced interpretation of Locke's work and its enduring relevance in today's democratic discourse:

- 1 .Investigate the ideas of other philosophers of the time, such as Hobbes and Rousseau, to highlight how Locke's views differed and contributed to the evolution of political thought .
- 2 .Discuss the relevance of Locke's ideas in today's political discourse, particularly in debates about individual rights, government accountability, and civil liberties.
- 3 .Examine critiques of Locke's philosophy, including arguments about its limitations or contradictions. Consider perspectives from feminist theory, Marxist theory, and post-colonial critiques regarding natural rights and social contracts.
- 4 .Explore how Locke's ideas have been adapted or challenged in various political contexts around the world, including non-Western societies.
- 5 .Explore the intersection of Islamic Allegiance (Bay'ah) and John Locke's Social Contract Theory: A Comparative Analysis .
- 6 .Explore how Locke's social contract differs from Hobbes' and how it justifies revolution and advocates for limited government.

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