



Charles-Louis De Secondat Montesquieu's Activities and The Political Ethical Principles Serving Peace

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Abstract: This study explores the political and ethical principles of Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu, focusing on his contributions to peace and governance. By analyzing Montesquieu's works, particularly *The Spirit of the Laws*, the research highlights his advocacy for liberty, equality, and the separation of powers as essential elements of a stable and just government. The study employs a historical and philosophical approach to examine his influence on democratic thought and modern political structures. Montesquieu's ideas emphasize that peace is achievable through just laws, balance in governance, and the moral responsibility of rulers and citizens. The findings suggest that his principles remain relevant in contemporary discussions on democracy and governance. Ultimately, the research concludes that Montesquieu's ethical-political philosophy serves as a foundation for sustaining peace and stability in diverse political systems. This article examines the life and early peace ideas of Charles-Louis Montesquieu, a prominent representative of French national philosophy during the Renaissance, from the perspective of political ethics. The study highlights some of the most significant empirical conclusions of Montesquieu's political philosophy, as identified by the author, and emphasizes the rational core of his political doctrine.

Keywords: Liberty, Equality, Humanity, Morality, Enlightenment, Patriotism, Democracy, Stability, Government, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Despotism.

Introduction

Charles-Louis de Secondat was born on January 18, 1689, in the Château de La Brède (located in the present-day Gironde department of the French Republic) and passed away on February 10, 1755, in Paris at the age of 66. Charles-Louis was born into a noble family at the Château de La Brède, near Bordeaux, which he inherited from his ancestors. He was the son of Jacques de Secondat (1654–1713), a government official from the Secondat lineage, who served in the nobility of the 17th century (Montesquieu, 2022). His mother, Marie-Françoise de Pesnel (1665–1696), held the title of Baroness of La Brède in the Secondat family and passed away when Charles was seven years old. In 1705, Montesquieu completed his studies at an Oratorian college (focused on music and the arts). He then studied law in Bordeaux and Paris. In 1714, he became a counselor in the Bordeaux Parliament. In 1715, he married Jeanne de Lartigue, a Protestant, and they had three children (Montesquieu, 1989). In 1716, following the death of his uncle, he inherited the position of Vice President of the

Bordeaux Parliament and the title of Baron. His duties in public service took up much of his time. For this reason, in 1726, Charles-Louis resigned from the presidency of the Bordeaux Parliament and dedicated himself to science (Ramgotra, 2014).

Aside from the worldly lifestyle of the capital, Montesquieu lived a mostly humble and simple life, often in solitude. As a hereditary landowner, he respected the public decisions of the parliamentary aristocracy. He was a rare type among the French aristocracy: *first*, Montesquieu was not swayed by the superficial pleasures of the Versailles court; *second*, he developed as a scholar with an independent noble spirit (Krotov, 2010).

Methodology

Between 1728 and 1731, Montesquieu undertook extensive research trips across Europe. For example, from October 1728 to April 1731, he lived in London. On May 12, 1729, under the leadership of the Duke of Norfolk, a Freemasonry gathering was held at "Horn", a venue for political meetings. The "British Journal" reported this event on May 16. In 1734–1735, Montesquieu participated in Freemasonry gatherings. Freemasonry was a religious-philosophical movement that emerged in the 18th century, whose supporters aimed at moral perfection but followed a reactionary path in politics (Russian-Uzbek Dictionary, 1983). After returning to the capital of the Kingdom of France, Montesquieu actively participated in Parisian literary salons (specially arranged rooms or venues for gatherings) and clubs. Later, he kept a journal, which was eventually published. Shortly before his death, in 1752, Montesquieu completed his work "Essay on Taste", which was included posthumously in the seventh volume of the "Encyclopédie", published in France in 1757 (Burkert, 2012).

Result and Discussion

In Montesquieu's political and legal doctrine, political liberty is considered the central idea. He believed that the necessary conditions for ensuring this liberty are just laws and the proper organization of the state. According to him, freedom can only be guaranteed through laws: "Liberty is the ability to do whatever the law permits". He also wrote, "Differences in climate create differences in needs, which are reflected in ways of life, and differences in ways of life lead to differences in laws". "The Spirit of the Laws" is a work that Montesquieu wrote over 20 years and published anonymously in Switzerland. The book also reflects a spirit of patriotism. Regarding its anonymous publication abroad, the primary reason, in our view, was its advocacy of republican ideas and discussions on equality. At that time, France was a monarchy where the concept of property equality, let alone the equality of citizens and individuals, was unimaginable. This was because true democracy, which supports the people's participation in governance, stood in direct contrast to the nature of monarchy and the prevailing political power structures. This also highlights Montesquieu's great courage, as his ideas went beyond the views of the aristocratic class to which he himself belonged (Patapan, 2012).

Other works by Montesquieu, "Persian Letters" (1721), "The Temple of Gnide" ("Le Temple de Gnide", 1725), "Considerations on the Greatness and Decline of the Romans" (1734), "The Spirit of the Laws" (1753), "Reflections on Universal Monarchy in Europe".

Recognition, In 1728, Montesquieu was elected a member of the French Academy; in 1730, he became a member of the Royal Society of London; and in 1746, he was elected a foreign member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

Montesquieu's work "Considerations on the Greatness and Decline of the Romans" was first published in 1734, with a revised edition released in 1748. In this book, commonly known as "Considerations", the author used the example of Roman history to demonstrate that a society thrives when its citizens are free, independent, and actively participate in governing the state. In contrast, when these conditions are absent, a state loses its greatness and ultimately falls victim to both internal and external enemies (The Political Theory of Montesquieu). At the time, "Considerations" did not gain much popularity in France. In the Parisian literary salons Montesquieu attended, some even said, "If 'Persian Letters' represents Montesquieu's greatness, then 'Considerations' is his downfall". However, the book quickly attracted attention in England and was translated into English. Following this, a German translation was published in Prussia, where Frederick the Great read it and left numerous annotations in his copy. In the Netherlands, "Considerations" was published three times in a single year, with all copies quickly selling out (Reflections on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decline of the Romans, 1734). In Russia, "Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness and Decline of the Romans" was published in 1769 in Saint Petersburg, translated by Alexei Pelenov. Several subsequent Russian editions have also been released (Hendrickson, 2014). However, this work has not yet been published in Uzbek. Montesquieu's "The Spirit of the Laws" was translated into Uzbek for the first time by Hamid Sodiq and published on April 24, 2024, under the review of political science doctor and professor Farhod Tolipov. We believe that such publications provide an intellectual and political stimulus to the development of social sciences, political science, and jurisprudence. Moreover, these efforts should continue, as they contribute significantly to the advancement of these fields. Translation is just as unique a phenomenon as the original work itself, because only virtuous individuals can contribute to the art of translation – it is an integral part of this great endeavor, just like science itself. As Montesquieu himself wrote, "They examine the parts only to understand the whole, and they study all causes to comprehend all consequences" (Montesquieu, 2024).

The Idea of a Republic, In "The Spirit of the Laws", Charles-Louis Montesquieu considers the idea of equality as the foundation of a republic. He stated, "By the concept of republican virtue, I mean love for the homeland, that is, love for equality" (Montesquieu, 2024). Montesquieu described the love of equality as "the fundamental force that drives a government based on republicanism" and stated, "On this basis, I have called love for the homeland and equality a political virtue". He defined equality as a political virtue and links it to morality, concluding that "In all countries of the world, morality is valued". He further explained, "Although the driving principle of a republic is political virtue, honor also exists within a republic. Likewise, while honor is the driving principle of monarchy, political virtue can still be found within it" (Montesquieu, 2024). Montesquieu, developing Polybius' ideas, demonstrates the interconnection between laws and principles of governance. He defined a "principle of government" as the primary passion that drives a particular form of

rule: for a republic, this is political virtue; for a monarchy, honor; and for despotism, fear. Montesquieu was one of the first thinkers to advocate the idea of the separation of powers. He argued that in any modern state, power should be divided into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. In this system, the executive power is led by the head of state (either a monarch or a president).

Montesquieu contributed to the development of political liberalism based on the principles of natural law. He justified and explained key principles such as the separation of the state from civil society, the division of powers, the supremacy of individual liberty, and the equality of citizens and human beings (Moroni, 2020).

On Equality, Montesquieu stated that humans are naturally equal. He emphasized, "In the state of nature, all people are born equal, but they cannot maintain this equality; society takes it away from them, and they regain equality only through laws" (Montesquieu, 2024). Montesquieu understood equality as the aspiration or social condition that ensured those who were superior to others were, in fact, equal to them. He wrote: "The spirit of true equality is as far from the spirit of excessive equality as the earth is from the sky. The essence of true equality does not lie in everyone commanding or no one commanding, but in people obeying their equals and being governed by their equals. It is not about ensuring that no one is superior to us, but rather that those who are above us remain equal to us" (Montesquieu, 2024). According to Montesquieu, democracy arises from this very equality, and he distinguished between two types of democracy: correct democracy and incorrect democracy. While explaining the difference between them, Montesquieu stated that in a correct democracy, people are equal only as citizens. However, in an incorrect democracy, citizens are also considered equal as rulers, senators, judges, fathers, husbands, and masters (SÄaFSTRÖM, 2021).

Equality simultaneously gives rise to freedom. Montesquieu stated that "the natural place of virtue is alongside freedom". However, he emphasized that excessive freedom leads to virtue only when it approaches slavery.

According to Montesquieu, democracy must avoid two pitfalls (boundaries): *first*, the spirit of inequality, which leads to aristocracy or the rule of a single person; and *second*, the spirit of excessive equality, which results in the despotism of one individual. This is because "the despotism of a single person inevitably ends in absolute domination" (Montesquieu, 2024).

Montesquieu's View on the People and Political Power, Montesquieu put forward the following judgments about the people: "They speak of the greatness of the people so that the people do not notice their (the entrusted individuals' – D.B. Sharipov) lust for power; they always try to raise the people's greed as a banner so that the people do not notice their own greed" (Montesquieu, 2024). "The only reason the people are given a lot is to take even more from them", he said (Montesquieu, 2024) "Great successes, especially those achieved with the vast participation of the people, fill them with such pride that they become ungovernable. Envious of officials and hostile to rulers, they soon turn into enemies of the entire state system" (Montesquieu, 2024). According to Montesquieu, the decline of any government almost always begins with the decline of its principles. "The principle of

democracy is not only lost when the spirit of equality is abandoned, but also when it is excessively intensified. It also collapses when everyone wants to be equal to the person they have elected to govern. In such a case, the people refuse to recognize the authority they have appointed and wish to do everything themselves: they begin to deliberate instead of the senate, govern instead of the officials, and judge instead of the judges. In a republic, when there is no longer room for virtue, the people begin to take on the duties of their rulers themselves, which means they no longer respect their rulers (Osborne, 2023). The decisions of the senate no longer carry weight, which means there is no respect for senators and, consequently, for elders. If there is no respect for elders, then there is no respect for fathers; wives do not obey their husbands, and subordinates do not submit to their superiors. Everything becomes driven by the spirit of unruly will. The burden of governance becomes as difficult as the duty of obedience. Children, women, and slaves forget the meaning of submission. And if there is no love for noble morals and discipline, then there is no virtue either" (Montesquieu, 2024). Thus, noble morals and discipline determine the order of the state, and therefore, peace and internal stability.

Laws of the Universe or Eternal Laws, Montesquieu wrote: "God belongs to the world as its creator and preserver; He preserves it by the same laws through which He created it. He acts according to these laws because He knows them; He knows them because He created them; and He created these laws because they correspond to His wisdom and power" (Montesquieu, 2024). According to him, the universe is governed by certain laws. Montesquieu distinguished between eternal laws or rules (created by God), the laws and principles of rational beings (that is, humans), and the laws derived from nature or natural laws. Thus, the first set of laws is built upon immutable rules – otherwise, the universe would collapse. The second consists of human laws, which must be based on the principles of justice, society, and equality. The third includes natural laws, which can be further divided into two categories: the laws of the physical world and the natural laws inherent to human beings. "...The world of rational beings is far from being governed with the same perfection as the physical world. Although the world of rational beings has immutable laws by its nature, it does not adhere to its laws (constitutions, codes, etc.) as consistently as the physical world follows its own laws. The reason for this is that individual rational beings are naturally limited and, therefore, prone to error. On the other hand, acting according to personal inclinations is inherent to their nature", Montesquieu stated (Montesquieu, 2024). He emphasized that humans do not consistently adhere to their original laws and do not always obey them (Siddiqui, 2024).

Conclusion

Montesquieu was one of the first Enlightenment thinkers to develop the principle of the separation of powers. If there were two key figures in this regard, one was him, and the other was John Locke. While Locke laid the foundation for this principle, Montesquieu significantly expanded it. According to Montesquieu, the primary goal of the separation of powers is to prevent the abuse of power (Peterson, 2024).

Overall, Montesquieu's work can be explained by the fact that, as an exemplary aristocrat and Enlightenment philosopher, he remains a subject of study in all social and humanitarian sciences. As a tribute to him, the government of the French Republic issued a 200-franc banknote featuring his portrait and dedicated to his work "The Spirit of the Laws".

Our next task is to conduct an in-depth analysis of Montesquieu's ideas on peace in political philosophy, as well as his methods and mechanisms for implementing them. Additionally, we aim to develop concepts for further enhancing Uzbekistan-France bilateral relations and strengthening Uzbekistan-EU (European Union) cooperation mechanisms (Sparling, 2019).

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