

## Rise and Decline of the Theory of Natural Rights in the Intellectual Tradition of Enlightenment Era Thinkers

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### Abstract

The theory of natural rights was a revolutionary doctrine that gradually gained attention. The main idea of this theory is to identify the rights that humans have due to human nature. This idea became a serious concern of Enlightenment thinkers such as Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Immanuel Kant and Thomas Paine, and it appeared in the provisions of the "American Declaration of Independence" and the "French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen". In this article, we are trying to examine the Rise and Decline of the theory of natural rights in the perspective of Enlightenment thinkers. The claim of the article is that criticisms such as disregard to social order and traditions of political society, abstraction and individualism, which were raised in various forms in the thought system of some thinkers such as Edmund Burke, Jeremy Bentham, Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, It caused the theory of natural rights to be gradually marginalized from the beginning of the 19th century. However, this was not the end of natural law theory and its teachings have been extended with different expressions and understandings in contemporary political and legal thought and have been pursued by a number of thinkers including John Rawls, Robert Nozick and John Tasioulas.

### Keywords:

Natural rights; political thought; Enlightenment era; human rights.

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