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## THE ROUSSEAUIAN DILEMMA: DIRECT VS. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

**Abstract:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau is one of the most controversial philosophers and political theorists of the Enlightenment. He has often been accused of laying the ideological foundation for many repressive and radical movements and regimes, from the reign of terror of the French Revolution to the right-wing and left-wing totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. Especially his idea of the general will has been criticised by scholars as an abstract Platonism that establishes the dictatorship of the state and rejects basic human rights. Some authors even believe that all of Rousseau's authoritarian passages are merely a paraphrase of arguments found in French absolutist thought. Nevertheless, Rousseau's novelty lay in his denial of identifying authority with only one person. Instead, sovereignty was based on the will of all those people who made up the political body. Accordingly, the theory of absolute monarchy was transformed into an alternative democratic version of absolute popular sovereignty. Rousseau is also considered one of the classics of the contractual tradition. He argued that mankind without a government would live in what he called a "state of nature" where there would be no law and order. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to compare Rousseau's ideas about the principles of political authority in two of his works: "The Social Contract" and "Considerations on the Government of Poland". In the first part of the paper we will briefly review the main concepts developed in The Social Contract, such as the general will, the social contract, sovereignty and direct democracy. In the second part, we will focus on the main ideas put forward in Considerations on the Government of Poland. Then, at the end, we will try to identify the reasons for the conceptual changes in some of Rousseau's views.

**Key words:** direct democracy, national traditions, Rousseau, social contract, general will, Poland.

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### Руссо дилеммасы: тікелей демократияға қарсы өкілді демократия

**Аннотация:** Жан-Жак Руссо – ағартушылық дәуірдегі ең даулы философтар мен саяси теоретиктердің бірі. Оған француз революциясының террорынан бастап, ХХ ғасырдағы оңшыл және солшыл тоталитарлық режимдерге дейінгі көптеген репрессиялық және радикалды қозғалыстар мен режимдердің идеологиялық негізін қалады деген айыптар тағылған. Әсіресе оның жалпы ерік идеясын ғалымдар мемлекеттің диктатурасын орнататын және адамның негізгі құқықтарын жоққа шығаратын дерексіз платонизм ретінде сынға алған. Кейбір авторлар тіпті Руссоның барлық авторитарлық үзінділері Француз абсолюттік пікірлерде кездесетін дәлелдерді қайталау деп санайды. Алайда, Руссоның жаңалығы оның билікті тек бір адаммен сәйкестендіруден бас тартуы болды. Оның орнына егемендік саяси ағзаны құрайтын барлық адамдардың еркіне негізделген. Тиісінше, абсолютті монархия теориясы абсолютті халықтық егемендіктің балама демократиялық нұсқасына айналды. Руссо сонымен қатар қоғамдық келісім дәстүрінің классиктерінің бірі болып саналады. Ол үкіметсіз адамзат "табиғи күй" деп аталатын жерде өмір сүреді, онда заң мен тәртіп болмайды деп сендірді. Осылайша, бұл жұмыстың негізгі мақсаты – Руссоның "Қоғамдық келісім" және "Польша үкіметі туралы пікірлер" атты екі еңбегіндегі саяси билік принциптері туралы ойларын салыстыру. Жұмыстың бірінші бөлімінде жалпы ерік, қоғамдық келісім, егемендік және тікелей демократия сияқты "Қоғамдық келісім" кітабында қарастырылған негізгі ұғымдарға қысқаша шолу жасаймыз. Екінші бөлімде "Польша үкіметі туралы пікірлер" кітабында айтылған негізгі идеяларға тоқталамыз. Сосын, соңында Руссоның кейбір көзқарастарындағы концептуалды өзгерістердің себептерін анықтауға тырысамыз.

**Түйін сөздер:** тікелей демократия, ұлттық дәстүр, Руссо, қоғамдық келісім, жалпы ерік, Польша.

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### Руссоистская дилемма: прямая демократия против представительской

Жан-Жак Руссо – один из самых противоречивых философов и политических теоретиков эпохи Просвещения. Его часто обвиняют в том, что он заложил идеологическую основу для многих репрессивных и радикальных движений и режимов, от террора Французской революции до правых и левых тоталитарных режимов двадцатого века. Особенно его идея общей воли критиковалась учеными как абстрактный платонизм, устанавливающий диктатуру государства и отвергающий основные права человека. Некоторые авторы даже считают, что все авторитарные пассажи Руссо – это всего лишь пересказ аргументов, встречающихся во французской абсолютистской мысли. Тем не менее, новизна Руссо заключалась в его отрицании отождествления власти только с одним человеком. Вместо этого суверенитет основывался на воле всех людей, составляющих политический организм. Соответственно, теория абсолютной монархии трансформировалась в альтернативную демократическую версию абсолютного народного суверенитета. Руссо также считается одним из классиков договорной традиции. Он утверждал, что человечество без правительства будет жить в том, что он называл «естественное состояние», где не будет закона и порядка. Таким образом, основная цель данной статьи – сравнить идеи Руссо о принципах политической власти в двух его произведениях: «Общественный договор» и «Соображения о правительстве Польши». В первой части работы мы кратко рассмотрим основные концепции, разработанные в «Общественном договоре», такие как общая воля, общественный договор, суверенитет и прямая демократия. Во второй части мы сосредоточимся на основных идеях, выдвинутых в «Соображениях о правительстве Польши». Затем, в конце, мы попытаемся определить причины концептуальных изменений в некоторых взглядах Руссо.

**Ключевые слова:** Прямая демократия, национальные традиции, Руссо, общественный договор, общая воля, Польша.

#### Introduction

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is one of the most controversial philosophers and political theorists of the Enlightenment in terms of his publications and personal life. From the discrepancies between his political ideas to the differences in moral teachings and his own personal life have been a topic of discussion among scholars for many years. He has often been accused of laying the ideological foundation for many repressive and radical movements and regimes, from the terror era of the French Revolution to the right-wing and left-wing totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century. His concept of “general will” is particularly criticized as abstract Platonism, establishing the dictatorship of the state and rejecting basic human rights.

Nevertheless, compared to his predecessors, Rousseau’s novelty consisted in denying the identification of authority with one person. Instead, sovereignty was based on the will of all those people who made up the political body. Thus, the theory of absolute monarchy was transformed into an alternative democratic version of absolute popular sovereignty. For Rousseau, sovereignty is an inalienable possession of human beings, part of their essence, and it is this idea that radically distinguishes him

from his predecessors, who viewed sovereignty as a temporary possession that had to be transferred to the appropriate authority. Thus, Rousseau attributes to the people not only the origin but also the exercise of sovereignty (Jennings, 2005, pp. 118-119).

#### Justification of the choice of articles and Goals and objectives

Rousseau is also considered to be one of the classics of the contractual tradition. He argued that humanity without government would live in the so-called “state of nature”, where would be no law and order. In this sense, he agrees with Hobbes that in the state of nature there are no concepts of law, rights and morality, which implies that people do not have a natural predisposition to follow the moral law. However, unlike Hobbes and Locke, he believes that people normally try to avoid causing any harm to others, not because they consider it immoral, but because they have a natural aversion to harm, even if it is directed at others. So, people naturally sympathize with others and get upset when they witness suffering (Wolff, 2006, p. 25). Overall, the concept of social contract is a theoretical attempt to legally justify basic human rights as opposed to political power represented by the state. Thus, con-

cepts such as “human nature”, “natural state” and “natural rights” come to the fore in the contractual tradition.

### Research methodology

The main subject of this article is Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ideas on political power in two of his works: *The Social Contract* and *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. The study will examine the concept of the general will and its relationship to sovereignty and direct democracy in *The Social Contract* and analyse Rousseau’s views on government and power structures in *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. In addition, the study will assess how Rousseau’s ideas evolved over time and what factors may have influenced this evolution.

### Results and discussion

#### The general will and direct democracy

Rousseau argues that there was true equality in the natural state and that the differences that existed between people were not so significant that they depended on each other, unlike modern civilized society based on illusory equality. Therefore, he asserts that in the natural state before the social contract, our emotions were genuine, and our traditions were crude but natural. According to Rousseau, modern man is born, lives and dies in slavery: “At his birth he is sewed in swaddling clothes; at his death he is nailed in a coffin. So long as he keeps his human shape, he is enchained by our institutions” (Rousseau, 1979, pp. 42-43). Thus, despite being born free, modern people find themselves bound everywhere, and even those who consider themselves masters of others cannot escape the reality of being slaves.

Rousseau contends that the skills and abilities that people developed over time as a result of the progress of their minds eventually led to technological progress. As people began to work and produce, the division of labour and progress led to increased interdependence between individuals. However, this also resulted in an increase in inequality as people learned to compare and compete with each other. Consequently, the division of skills and abilities between people, as a result of the reality that talented individuals produce more, revealed strong and weak, i.e., rich and poor people. The absolute equality and liberty of individuals from nature were irreversibly limited. Accordingly, Rousseau argues that as soon as one person began to need the assistance of another;

as soon as it became clear that it was beneficial for one person to have food for two, equality disappeared, property and the need for labour emerged. (Rousseau, 1997, p. 167).

Hence, Rousseau argues that the appearance of the property opened a chasm between people, and created dominant relationships between them. This situation resulted in an insecure and restless social order characterized by a master-slave relationship. He refers to this order as aggregation of individuals, not association because there is no political unity or public good in it (Rousseau, 1999, p. 53).

According to Rousseau, the creation of civil society provides conditions for the moral improvement of people, and the totality of individual wills and freedoms united through a social contract creates a political organism, the so-called “general will”, which is infallible, indivisible, and cannot be represented. This general will is collective decision-making, which is prevalent or widely favored, and which requires compliance from all citizens for the common good and harmony in the state. The general will manifests itself in the voting, the results of which serve as a guide to action. Rousseau writes, “Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will; and we as a body receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole” (Rousseau, 1999, p. 55).

Thus, when individuals become part of a political body, they unconditionally fall under the subordination of the general will, and this extends beyond individual choice, rather becoming a question of duty: “In order therefore that the social pact should not be an empty formula, it contains an implicit obligation which alone can give force to the others, that if anyone refuses to obey the general will he will be compelled to do so by the whole body; which means nothing else than that he will be forced to be free” (Rousseau, 1999, p. 58).

Rousseau further argues that democracy is the best form of government for free people, but he rejects elective democracy and favors direct democracy, only it can provide the conditions for citizens to act truly freely. Without freedom, it is impossible to imagine the emergence of moral citizens, as unfree people primarily think about their needs and self-preservation rather than what should be done. Therefore, in his view, it is only through self-government that people can achieve freedom, since by giving up the right to make laws through direct participation, people give up freedom and thus the morality of their actions (Rousseau, 1999, p. 50).

Just as power is a vital aspect of the physical dimension of the person, so will is a fundamental characteristic of the moral dimension. Just as an individual person is prohibited from legally transferring their will to another, as in the case of slavery, a collective entity cannot transfer its general will to others. Thus, according to Rousseau, people functioning as a collective entity, rather than as citizens in their individual capacity, are enslaved by transferring their legislative rights to others (Douglass, p. 740). In this regard, Rousseau remarks about his contemporaries, saying that they do not have slaves but are enslaved themselves; they pay for the freedom of their representatives with their own freedom (Rousseau, 1999, p. 128).

In a representative democracy with an elected government, people are deprived of their freedom by transferring it to the will of others, since elected representatives cannot know the general will and are not obliged to follow it. Instead, they act according to individual will and adopt laws based on the values and beliefs of groups and individuals, rather than on the interests of the entire population (Sweedeen, pp. 32-33).

However, Rousseau acknowledges that direct democracy can be effective only in geographically small states with a homogeneous and unified population. In large and populous states, the importance of individual will in governance loses its power and relevance. In small states, it is easier for people to make laws and govern a country since a small and homogeneous population means greater unity in beliefs, values and ideas. Therefore, Rousseau argues that an increase in territory and population leads to a decrease in objectivity of governance and to the substitution of the interests and will of all citizens by the will of groups and individuals (Rousseau, 1999, p. 94).

Thus, for Rousseau, the state is legitimate only when the people are the sovereign, and laws are adopted in accordance with the general will. Rousseau refers to this type of regime as a Republic. However, the state still needs an executive power that will enforce the adopted laws. In this case, the government can be organized in the form of a monarchy (a single magistrate), or in the form of an aristocracy (a small number of private citizens) or as a democracy (the entire population or the majority of people). All these forms of government are legitimate and relevant in different contexts (Artacho, pp. 47-48).

Rousseau argues that no nation can be free until it understands that the only legitimate way to or-

ganize a state is to believe in popular sovereignty. However, popular sovereignty and popular government are distinct concepts, as popular government refers to a system in which people take over and directly perform executive functions. Thus, Rousseau calls a republic any state governed by laws, regardless of the form of government: "By this word I do not refer only to aristocracies and democracies, but in general to any government directed by law, which is the general will. In order to be legitimate it is not necessary that the government should be indistinguishable from the sovereign, but that it should be the minister of the sovereign: then even a monarchy is a republic" (Rousseau, 1999, p. 75).

Thus, it may be stated that The Social Contract was aimed at revealing the difference between legislative and executive power, i.e., between the sovereign and the government. Rousseau emphasized that there would be tyranny if these two powers were controlled by one political body. He advocated for a representative executive power and recommended an elected aristocracy for this role. Therefore, his criticism of the concept of representation was not directed at representative government per se, but rather at representative sovereignty<sup>1</sup> (Douglass, p. 737).

Yet, such a legislative structure poses a problem related to majority voting and individual freedom. Although Rousseau's earlier statements that freedom is submission to the law that a person has established for himself, it may seem that later he contradicts himself by saying that freedom is submission to the law adopted by the majority of citizens, even if the person himself remains in the minority. Nonetheless, Rousseau claims that once people accept the rules of majority voting unconditionally, everyone is obliged. But this does not imply submission to the will of the majority, but only to the votes of the majority. Voters are asked only whether the proposed bill corresponds to the general will or not. Accordingly, majority voting does not involve being subject to the will of the majority, but rather involves placing reliance on the majority's perspective that reflects the general will (Douglass, pp. 741-742).

Rousseau condemned modern political life for the lack of common morality, virtue and civic religion. Instead, he revered ancient political systems for their high unity, which encouraged people to en-

<sup>1</sup> Some scholars view this criticism of the use of representatives as opposition to Hobbes' theory of representation, in which people can be represented by leaders with absolute power, such as monarchs, or by political bodies such as the Genevan patriciate or the English Parliament. Robin Douglass, "Rousseau's Critique of Representative Sovereignty: Principled or Pragmatic?", p. 736.

tirely socialize and be truly political. Rousseau believed that in early societies such as Sparta, marked by a focus on the common good, a unifying civic religion, the virtuous deployment of artistic and military skills, and lack of individualism, people felt part of a larger entirety. He regarded it as an example of a proper political society and argued that modern people have lost this ancient spiritual vigour due to extreme selfishness (Riley, pp. 100-102).

Thus, Rousseau sought to adhere to both the position that the ancient highly organized political community is the best kind of political system and the idea that all political society is conventional, which is possible solely due to individual will and social contract<sup>2</sup>. Nonetheless, he does not think that the ancient polities were created by a social contract, instead, he contends that they were created by the genius of legislators such as Moses and Lycurgus (Riley, pp. 106-107).

Rousseau, thereby, seeks to bring the individual will into line with the general will through the role of the great legislator. He tries to replace the lack of morality of the common good with the wisdom of great legislators (Riley, p. 115). It should be said that Rousseau rejected natural law and believed that the will should correspond to ancient perfection. This creates a contradiction since the ancient standard is non-voluntarist; the standard that gives the will its object is in itself a negation of voluntarism (Riley, p. 121).

### Deviation in the name of practicality

In another book, “Considerations on the Government of Poland”, we can observe a marked change in Rousseau’s views on the question of sovereignty. In this regard, the historical context and the time of writing of the book are important for understanding the reasons for this change. Thus, in 1770, Rousseau received an offer from Michal Wielhorski, a representative of the Bar Confederation, to write recom-

mendations for reforming Poland. It should be noted that this was a difficult and unstable period for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, legislation was plagued by corruption, and the “liberum veto” (the right to block legislative proposals) was used regularly and to the advantage of individuals and groups. In addition, the elected monarchy was vulnerable to manipulation by powerful individuals, and the situation was exacerbated by the lack of a strong army. Therefore, although Rousseau developed his recommendations to strengthen Polish statehood in front of its neighbors, he believed that sooner or later Poland would be forced to recognize the domination of stronger neighbors, which happened in 1772. In this sense, we can view Rousseau’s recommendations as practical advice aimed at preserving Poland’s independence as much as possible, despite his predictions about the loss of sovereignty (Schaeffer, 2010, pp. 378-379).

Thus, it is important to note here once again that the work was written by Rousseau specifically for the Bar Confederation, was not intended for the general public, and was only published posthumously. Its specific aims, as well as the audience for whom it was written, distinguish it from the speculative political philosophy of *The Social Contract*. Rousseau was assured that the recommendations would be taken seriously. It was expected that the work would produce real practical results. For this purpose, Rousseau in his work took into account the complex federal political structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Therefore, it was difficult to adhere to the principles described in *The Social Contract*, because the state structure of Poland differed significantly from the republics described in his earlier works. (Thompson, 2016, pp. 333-334).

Consequently, Rousseau paid great attention to the traditions of Polish statehood and believed that the existing Polish social institutions already provided Poles with a high level of freedom. It was the preservation of these institutions, despite the occupation, that would help Poles survive as a nation. Rousseau argued that by preserving traditions they would remain Poles, and by remaining Poles, they would preserve personal freedom, which would be difficult to take away (Petersen, 1995, pp. 255-256).

In his work, Rousseau deliberately uses the existing way of life and government in his arguments rather than describing an ideal state, and in this sense the work is not utopian or Platonic. Interestingly, in his recommendations, Rousseau, who is considered the father of the modern revolutionary spirit, urges Poles not to change or add anything unless it is

<sup>2</sup> Riley points out that the will, which Rousseau considers the source of all political obligations, is at the same time the cause of everything he hates in modern society. Moreover, he says that the absence of the idea of individual will made possible unified ancient states with common morality. He suggests that Rousseau’s idea of a common will was an attempt to combine the generality of ancient morality (unity) with the will of modernity (consent, contract). However, Riley believes that the concepts of generality and will are mutually exclusive, and the will can be considered general only metaphorically. The general will that Rousseau admired in ancient communities is not the general will, but the political morality of the common good, where the individual will simply does not appear with objections to society. Patrick Riley. *Will and Political Legitimacy. A Critical Exposition of Social Contract Theory in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel*, pp. 108-113.

absolutely necessary, and not to shock the government with drastic changes. Thus, Rousseau argued that the authentic identity of citizens, their patriotic devotion, is the only bastion that is always ready for defence and that no army can break through. He believed that if no Pole became a Russian, Russia would never conquer Poland (Rousseau, 2008, p. 5).

Thus, Rousseau's political plan begins by emphasizing the upbringing and education of children from birth. He recommends that Poles organize games and competitions so that children develop an emotional attachment to state law from an early age. At school competitions, children should be rewarded for their good knowledge of Polish history and laws. In this way, contests and competitions will be used as a means of recognizing the most successful pupils in the opinion of adults and peers (Putterman, 2001, p. 487).

Consequently, for children, social approval will be desired and valued and they will try to get it. Rousseau believes that in this way, children will grow up with a love for the homeland because social approval and various rewards received in recognition of their achievements will be associated with the homeland. In addition, the patriotic feelings evoked by public spectacles and other state ceremonies will be associated by everyone with the laws of the state, since it is constantly present when these performances are organized. Thus, Rousseau argues that for accomplishing this, it becomes essential to educate children from early childhood because a person can only become a citizen when they are educated to do so from an early age (Putterman, 2001, p. 488).

Rousseau further raises the topic of manners and tastes and criticizes the spread of French and pan-European manners across the continent. He writes: "Today, no matter what people may say, there are no longer any Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, or even Englishmen; there are only Europeans. All have the same tastes, the same passions, the same manners, for no one has been shaped along national lines by peculiar institutions. All, in the same circumstances, will do the same things; all will call themselves unselfish, and be rascals; all will talk of the public welfare, and think only of themselves; all will praise moderation, and wish to be as rich as Croesus" (Rousseau, 2008, p. 5). His criticism of French manners and taste was due to their propensity for luxury and self-promotion. Therefore, he argued that these pan-European values and the loss of distinctive institutions could lead to the loss of freedom and the general will of Poles, as morality

based on selfishness could never correspond to the general will (Thompson, 2016, p. 335).

Along with the education of children and state ceremonies, Rousseau proposes another reform related to the use of public approval. This reform involves using the general approval of the people, or so-called "the public eye," as a tool for selecting deputies, officials, and magistrates, and generally for developing the idea of good citizenship. He proposes to use "the public eye" as an informal check on the executive, i.e., to appoint judges according to public opinion of their merit to ensure that judges will relate their duties to the welfare of society as a whole. Rousseau writes, "This is to arrange things so that every citizen will feel himself to be constantly under the public eye; that no one will advance or succeed save by the favour of the public; that no office or position shall be filled save by the will of the nation; and finally that, from the lowliest nobleman, even from the lowliest peasant, up to the king, if possible, all shall be so dependent on public esteem that nothing can be done, nothing acquired, no success obtained without it" (Rousseau, 2008, pp. 40-41).

Speaking of distinctive institutions, Rousseau brings up the subject of state structure and supports the Polish-Lithuanian system of federalism; he advocates maximum separation of the elements from each other. For him, this is one way to prevent the vice of state size that could lead Poland to internal despotism. He writes, "Let the separation of the two Polands be as complete as that of Lithuania is from them; have three states united in one. If possible, I should like you to have as many states as you now have palatinates" (Rousseau, 2008, p. 12).

Moreover, Rousseau believes it is crucial to define each part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a state, and each Palatinate as a state-like political association. Therefore, he argues that the expansion and improvement of the federal government system should be considered first, as it is the only system that incorporates the advantages of both large and small states. Although large states have powerful armies, wealth, and fame, Rousseau believes that they are almost always despotic. We can therefore consider this advice as one of the most important in his work, as he states that if this advice is ignored, it is unlikely that the endeavour will ever succeed (Rousseau, 2008, p. 12).

As has already become clear, for Rousseau the best regime for free men is a republic with a small territory and a homogeneous population where direct democracy is practiced. But in his recommen-

dations for reforms, some changes are easily noticeable, especially concerning the organization of the legislature. Rousseau, given the practical nature of his recommendations, makes some concessions and adjustments related to his idea of direct democracy. For example, in response to fears that the Palatines would become too independent of the central government, he develops a special political system in which local sovereignty is the basis of national sovereignty, which is standardized and limited to national policies. In this way, he develops the idea of two-tiered federal sovereignty (Thompson, 2016, p. 338).

Under such a political structure, the most important local political institution, which will play a fundamental role in the constitution, becomes the Dietine (Sejmik). These are local assemblies that will include all Polish nobles of each Palatinate. Thus, Rousseau proposes a parallel principle whereby the nobility, while being part of a single political community, are simultaneously members of each individual palatinate (Thompson, 2016, p. 339).

For practical reasons, Rousseau argues that a large state like the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth has no choice but to make its legislature representative in a national Sejm. At the same time, he recognizes that this idea does not coincide with his idea of popular sovereignty, separates the general will from legislation, and creates a risk of corrupting legislators. But nevertheless, he believes that the Dietines would retain an active position as the legislative sovereign of Poland while at the same time representing the legislature. On this basis, Rousseau

argues that sovereignty takes shape in the Dietines (Thompson, 2016, p. 335).

### Conclusion

As has become evident, Rousseau in his recommendations modifies the previously developed concepts of sovereignty and general will to the extent that the federal structure of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth requires it. However, his position on the importance of the general will remains unchanged. He allows for the existence of a representative legislature, but on condition that the general will prevails.

Thus, we can conclude that Rousseau's deviation from his position on the concepts of direct and representative political power is not principled, but practical in nature, dictated by the real state of affairs on the ground. Accordingly, we see that Rousseau, when writing his reform recommendations, tried to adhere as much as possible to the ideas and principles set forth in *The Social Contract*.

In addition, another important conclusion is that for Rousseau, Polish national traditions are important not only for maintaining a sense of patriotism but also for practising the general will, which is seen as an important factor in maintaining the functionality of the constitution. He argues that only fidelity to tradition and the upholding of national character can keep the citizens of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from being absorbed and assimilated by stronger neighbours. He summarizes that only national identity will help Poles survive the occupation and eventually prosper again.

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