

E. H. WOLGAST'S CRITIQUE OF INDIVIDUALISM AS SOCIAL ATOMISM

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ABSTRACT

Individualism is an important philosophical idea that determines and shapes the modern political philosophy, and especially liberalism as a political theory. In the context of political thought, individualism gives priority to the individual over society and state. This priority results in the idea that each individual has inviolable rights and these rights must be protected by laws. The aim of this paper was to illuminate Wolgast's critique of individualism. Wolgast gave a systematic critique of individualism in her work. Her critique was based on the conception of social atomism. Before analyzing her critique, in Section 1, the basic definition and explanation of individualism will briefly be given. Then, this concept will be elucidated in the realm of political philosophy. In Section 2, the conception of social atomism will be explicated. According to Wolgast, social atomism justifies and characterizes individualism as a political thought. In Section 3, Wolgast's critique of individualism will be explicated in the context of social atomism. In doing so, focus will be placed on her critique of individual rights, which is at the center of individualism as political thought for her. Section 4 presents an evaluation and critique of Wolgast's ideas on individualism.

Key Words: Individualism, Social Atomism, Rights, Liberalism

E. H. WOLGAST'IN SOSYAL ATOMİZM OLARAK BİREYCİLİK ELEŞTİRİSİ

ÖZ

Bireycilik, modern siyaset felsefesini ve özellikle de politik bir düşünce olarak liberalizmi belirleyen ve şekillendiren önemli bir felsefi düşüncedir. Politik düşünce bağlamında, bireycilik devlet karşısında bireye öncelik verir. Her bir birey çiğnenemez haklara sahiptir ve bu haklar yasalarca korunmalıdır düşüncesi bu önceliğin sonucudur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Wolgast'ın bireyciliğe yönelik eleştirilerini aydınlatmak olacaktır. O kendi eserlerinde bireyciliğe dönük sistematik bir eleştiri yapmıştır. Onun eleştirisi sosyal atomizm kavramına dayanır. Onun eleştirilerine geçmeden önce, birinci bölümde bireyciliğin tanımını verilip kavram kısaca analiz edilecektir. Sonrasında bireyciliğin siyaset felsefesindeki yerini açıklanacaktır. İkinci bölümde, sosyal atomizm kavramı izah edilecektir. Wolgast'a göre sosyal atomizm, liberal siyaset felsefesinin en önemli düşüncesi olarak bireyciliği gerekçelendiren ve karakterize eden ana fikirdir. Üçüncü bölümde, Wolgast'ın sosyal atomizm bağlamında bireyciliğe yönelttiği eleştirileri ele alınacaktır. Bunu yaparken Wolgast'ın politik bir düşünce olarak bireyciliğin merkezinde olduğunu düşündüğü bireysel haklar üzerine olan eleştirilerine odaklanılıp bu eleştirilere yer verilecektir. Sonuç olarak dördüncü bölümde Wolgast'ın bireyciliğe yönelik eleştirileri üzerine değerlendirmelere ve eleştirilere yer verilecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Bireycilik, Sosyal Atomizm, Haklar, Liberalizm

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Introduction

Individualism is one of the most influential political ideas in modern and contemporary political philosophy. The basic foundation of individual rights and liberal democracies in West has been especially justified by this philosophical thought. We have many philosophical concepts that are directly related to individualism, such as individual rights and liberties. Besides that, individualism in the realm of politics represents itself by political philosophers as kind of anti-authoritarianism. According to Minogue, individualism is modern western philosophical thought that differs it from non-European societies, such as Hindu-caste and Asian societies. With individualism modern western societies have been changed in many ways. Instead of the ruling of customs and religion, which determines ethical and political life through "one right order of life", pluralism becomes a more powerful idea that respects to the differences of people with regard to ethical and political truths. In viewing the world through this perspective, European culture gives priority to the rule of law that guarantees individual rights and respects the value of differences between people in terms of ethical and political life.¹ Based on these considerations, individualism seems to liberate people from the hegemony of the customs and traditions that dictates only one type of ethical and political life and eliminates differences. Although individualism in that context has become highly influential and has gained power in the realm of political philosophy, it has been criticized seriously by some philosophers. These critiques basically investigate the origin of individualism's philosophical background and also scrutinize the social and political problems that emerges from it.

In this article, these two issues will be explained and analyzed from the perspective of Wolgast's critique on individualism. Elizabeth H Wolgast is one of the most important American philosophers and her work on ethics and politics are especially highly influential and well-known in the academic circle of American political philosophy. In this paper, Wolgast's critique of individualism will be examined in that sense. She explicitly claims that the ontological background of individualism is social atomism.² Besides that, individualism as social atomism gives rise to many social and political problems for Wolgast. These problems will be explained and analyzed in this essay. In that sense, the

¹ Kenneth Minogue, Individualism and Its Contemporary Fate, *The Independent Review*-Vol 17:2, 2012, 259.

² Wolgast, Elizabeth H. *The Grammar of Justice* (Cornell University Press, 1987), pp. 2

purpose of this article was to examine this idea critically from the point view of Elizabeth Wolgast. This idea was defined and characterized as social atomism by her. This essay aimed to illuminate Wolgast's critique of individualism as social atomism. This article proceeds as follows. First, the conception of social atomism will be explicated. According to Wolgast, social atomism justifies and characterizes individualism as a political thought. Second, Wolgast's critique of individualism will be explicated in the context of social atomism. In doing so, focus will be placed on her critique of individual rights, which is at the center of individualism as political thought for her. Finally, an evaluation and critique of Wolgast's ideas on individualism will be presented. In the following section, the conception of social atomism will be explicated in that context.

Social Atomism

Before analyzing social atomism, an explanation of what atomism means as a theory will be given. In order to understand to social atomism, which is one type of atomism, it is necessary to clarify and elucidate what atomism means explicitly. According to Whyte, atomism simply "means the reduction of phenomena to fixed unit factors". There are different types of atomism, such as epistemological, linguistic, logical, biological, social, psychological, and physical atomism. Each has the same method, which breaks down the whole into pieces. For example, biological atomism breaks down the whole organism into genes, and logical atomism breaks down the argument into propositions.³ Although there are different types of atomism, all of them depend on the methodologically of physical atomism. Physical atomism, first of all, is a scientific theory. It is a scientific theory that explains how the physical universe works and how things in the universe react to each other. This type of atomism is the basic one and it is called physical atomism. Whyte defined physical atomism as follows:

"But physical atomism is more than logical analysis. It is the assumption that there is a quantitative limit to division, that small ultimate units exist, and that large-scale phenomena are to be accounted for in terms of the small and therefore in terms of these ultimate units".⁴

³ Lancelot Law, Whyte, *Essay on Atomism* (Wesleyan University Press, 1961), pp. 12.

⁴ Whyte, 14.

The idea here is that, as explained above, dividing the whole matter to the small unit, such as atomic particles, is atomistic explanation. According to Wolgast, social atomism as a political theory in political philosophy that was first introduced and defended by Thomas Hobbes. This idea was also supported and developed by Locke. As a political theory, individualism as social atomism has been defended and theorized in today's world through the ideas of John Rawls and Robert Nozick, who are two important contemporary political philosophers. The features of this idea that characterizes individuals are listed as follows: "autonomous, unconnected, and rational human individual". Beginning with this characterization of a person provides a normative basis to the moral, political, and epistemological foundation. 'Natural, free, rational, and moral autonomous individuals thereafter have become the main subject of moral and political life. In addition to that, individualism represents itself as anti-authoritarian thought and practice.⁵

As noted above, atomism is used as a method in many fields, such as biology, linguistics, physics, and society. In order to understand social atomism, it is necessary to examine how this method is applied to society and what kind of relationship is seen between individuals and molecules (atomism as this method, dissolves atoms to molecules). Is it really individual considered like a molecule in this theory? And what kind of result can be expected from this similarity in political thought? In this section, the first question will be answered through Wolgast's explanation on similarity between individuals and atoms. In the later section, the consequences of this philosophical theory will be analyzed from the point view of Wolgast's critique on individualism as social atomism. Answering the first question through philosophical arguments, we now turn to Wolgast's interpretation on this issue from Hobbes' account of human nature, because Hobbes was the first social atomist philosopher for Wolgast. She explicitly depicted this relationship as follows:

"In Hobbes's picture of equal autonomous agents, people can be likened to molecules of gas bouncing around inside a container. Each molecule proceeds independently, is free to go its own way, although it occasionally bumps into others in its path. As molecules have their energy, people are driven by their passions, and their relations with one another reflect both their "love (of) Liberty, and (love of)

⁵ Wolgast, Elizabeth H. *The Grammar of Justice* (Cornell University Press, 1987), pp.2.

Dominion over others. No atom helps or moves aside for another; that wouldn't make sense. They are a collection of unrelated units. This fundamental picture I call "social atomism", for it shows society as a simple collection of independent, self-motivated units".⁶

What is significant here is that there is an explanation of society from the perspective of atomism. Wolgast's interpretation of Hobbes quote above was based on the depiction of Hobbes on human nature and his famous distinction of state of nature and social contract. When Hobbes defined human beings as individuals, his depiction was based on the explanation of the state of nature. Before the contract, human beings were in a state of nature in which there was a war among the individuals, and each of them faced off "the life of solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short".⁷ Keeping that in mind, like atoms, individuals were described independent and uncorrelated units. Wolgast rephrased this similarity through an example. If we asked a question about how a material like a brick in a wall was made up? The answer to this question from the point view of atomism is molecules as substance. Likewise, if we ask how a society is made up? The answer of social atomism is individuals as unit or substance. The depiction of the features of individuals herein is that individuals as a unit, like molecules, "self-contained, self-motivated, energized from within, by passion and desires".⁸ Hobbesian individualism is generally described by scholars as an atomistic view that sees each human beings separate plain particulars. According to Machan, Hobbesian individualism is based on materialistic worldview and it represents itself as radical thought in the place of individuals in society ontologically.⁹ In that regard, this atomistic view is fundamental because it depicts human beings ontologically. Besides Hobbes, Locke defined political subjects, that is, individuals, as follows: "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".¹⁰

According to Wolgast, the description of individuals from the point view of Locke was likewise Hobbes' account. The political philosophy of Locke takes

⁶ Wolgast, 4.

⁷ Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.84.

⁸ Wolgast, 11.

⁹ Machan, Tibor R. *Classical Individualism* (Routledge Press, 1998), pp.2-3.

¹⁰ Locke, John. *Two Treaties of Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Yale University Press, 2003), pp.141.

the independent, free, and equal persons at the center of politics. In this thought, the main idea behind any social organization and state is justified only through interest of natural, free, independent, and equal individuals.¹¹ This new way of looking at politics makes important changes between citizen and government. In the following sections, these changes will be depicted and analyzed, but for now, this new way of political philosophy will be compared with other political thoughts. In order to understand these differences, it is necessary to look at political philosophies before social atomism. Ancient Greek's political philosophy and explanation of society from the perspective of this tradition especially helps us to conceive what kind of result emerges from social atomism. Wolgast clarified this thought, making reference to Aristotle's understanding and depiction of society and person, as follows:

“Among those who have held anti-atomistic views were the ancient Greeks. Aristotle, for instance, believed that a man is a particular only in the context of his community. To understand individual, the, we must begin with community he or she belongs to... For Aristotle a person is the legal child of so-and-so, the husband of so-and-so, the father of so-and-so, the owner of such land, the person who trades in such goods, the one who holds such office and votes such-and-such name. These social properties and relationship define a person”.¹²

What seems clear from the above quote, is that the definition of a person in the thought and political life by Ancient Greeks is the opposite of the Modern thought and political life. The first defines and describes a person as relational to the family, citizens, lands, and people who work with them, while Ancient Greek sees a person not independent and self-interested units, but socially and morally dependent and responsible. As Solomon pointed out, in Ancient Greek philosophy, there is a harmony between individual and community. This harmony strings together both the individual and community. They are there for each other, but in the modern age, this kind of harmonic society is destroyed. Instead, modern thought sees no harmony between individual and society. It divides politics into two vulgar metaphors. One is the naturally selfish and self-interested individuals and the other is impersonal and abstracted intuitions. Community is organized not by individuals, who share same aims with

¹¹ Wolgast, 5-6.

¹² Wolgast, 9-10.

community and work together the other members of it, but by bureaucracies that make laws and rules in abstracted ways. For Solomon, in this kind of society, human beings have lost their alliance to society and have become alienated and experience loneliness with each fellow human being.¹³ In that sense, giving priority to the individuals over society makes individualism an ontological account of social life from the perspective of atomism. It can be depicted as the opposite of holism, which sees individual and society as interrelated and unseparated.¹⁴ For this reason, defining individuals like the particulars of atoms and giving priority to individuals over society can be called an ontological split-off from holistic worldview.

This new type of theory and its implications on social and political life create new problems. In the following section, these problems, created by social atomism, will be analyzed from the point view of Wolgast. It is important to note here that she has traced a route through the basic framework of individualism as social atomism so as to reveal the problems that human beings are exposed to. These problems are revealed in the realm of individual rights for Wolgast.

Wolgast's Critique of Individualism in the Context of Social Atomism

Before Wolgast's critique of individualism as social atomism, a common definition of individualism in the realm of political philosophy will be given. Roger Scruton, in the *Dictionary of Political Thought*, defined individualism as follows:

"The attitude which sees the individual human person, his rights, and his needs, as taking precedence over all collectives (whether family, corporation, civil society, or state), in moral and political decision-making. Usually justified by the basic theory that only individuals have rights (or, at any rate, only individuals have natural rights): the attribution of rights to a collective being simply a way of summarizing the rights held by individuals by virtue of their membership of it".¹⁵

¹³ Robert C. Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of Social Contract* (Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 1995), pp.94-95.

¹⁴ Bird, Colin. *The Myth of Liberal Individualism* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 44.

¹⁵ Roger Scruton, *Dictionary of Political Thought* (Pallgrave Macmillian Press, 2007), pp. 324

Above from this quote, it seems clear that individualism places individual at the center of politics. In that regard, this thought aimed to create a society in which individuals and their choices, needs, rights, life plans, and well-being come before to society and state. However, it has been changed with regard to the problems of today's politics and demanding of justice. For example, we have many types of individual rights now than before. In the past, we had the rights of liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. These rights were explicitly declared by the French Declaration of the Rights of Man. Its main thesis was that "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights"¹⁶ These rights are called the first generation of rights in the literature. Besides that, after World War II, new types of rights were introduced and accepted. In 1948 came the Declaration of Human Rights, wherein these rights were listed as "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care".¹⁷ In addition to that, education was also declared as an individual right in this list. "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages".¹⁸ In 1979, the UN General Assembly acknowledged women's rights to remove discrimination against women, such as the participation of women in political, economic, and cultural life.¹⁹ Moreover, the right of children was accepted and effected by the UN General Assembly in 1990. It declared to protect children from threatening of their life and welfare, such as economic exploitation, trafficking, the illicit use of drugs, and all forms of exploitation and abuse.²⁰ As we have seen, today we have different types of individual rights that include not only liberty, security, and property, but also social and economic rights, such as health care and education for men, women, and children. Although individual rights have been expanded and improved, the fundamental idea behind these rights has not changed. This idea and the justification of it have been seriously discussed and criticized by many of today's philosophers. Wolgast specified her critique of individuals rights, which were the result of social atomism for her, with regard to patient rights, children rights, and

¹⁶ Andrew Clapham, *Human Rights, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 10.

¹⁷ James R. Lewis and Carl Skutsch, *The Human Rights Encyclopedia* (M. E. Sharpe Press, 2001), pp. 633.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 696.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 946.

²⁰ Clapham, pp. 50.

women rights. In the following paragraphs, Wolgast's critique on these issues will be illuminated. Before illuminating these critiques, the language of these rights will be explained. In order to understand her critique, it will be necessary to linguistically look at the content of individual rights. According to Wolgast, the language of rights is expressed through words, such as claimed, asserted, demanded, pressed, or waived. The main idea behind claiming a right is associated with its benefits to person. Although it has benefits, rights could be identified as passive, wherein a right holder could choose to demand his/her right or not. Furthermore, claiming or demanding rights is generally done against somebody or something. For example, a child claims and demands the right to free education against the state if the state does not give this right, or a citizen claims and demands the right to vote against anyone who impedes.²¹ In that regard, the language of individual rights brings individuals up against individuals if there are the violations of rights. This type of confrontation among individuals makes one person the complainant and the other the defendant. Wolgast claimed that this conceptualization of rights might not be effective to solve some injustices in society.²² Elucidating this claim, we will turn to her critique of individual rights, such as patient's, children's, and women's rights.

Patient rights are widely known and accepted by many states in the constitution. In reference to Foucault's explanation of the development of clinics, Wolgast defined the new relationship between the patient and doctor as impersonal and scientific. The doctor becomes an expert of diseases and abstracts all qualities of persons through considering only illness and disease. According to Wolgast, the first problem with patient's rights is that it reduces the patient and doctor relationship to the formal and impersonal state. It omits some qualities of patients and doctors. There are only diseased people and the experts of diseases in that relationship. The gaining of knowledge of medicine by a doctor makes himself/herself a powerful person who controls patients like an object²³ Wolgast's point on these relationships was that it alienates people from each other and makes the doctor an expert of a science and patient an object of this scientific study. What is missing in that relationship is that it removes the genuine relationship between the patient and doctor on the behalf of power. A doctor who has the power of scientific knowledge of medicine as an expert treats

²¹ Wolgast, 1987, 30.

²² Wolgast, 32.

²³ Wolgast, 32-33.

the patients as a representation of the disease. Patients are described by their illnesses and diseases in the context of scientific language. The emotional aspect of the human relationship and differences among the patients as a personally is dismissed. According to Wolgast, the second problem with patient's rights is that it makes the patients complainant and the doctors defendants.²⁴ This kind of relationship rules out the most important value of trust between the patients and doctor. As Wolgast pointed out:

“Looking at the doctor-patient relationship in this light, we see that there is no room for, no representation of, the doctor's responsibility for the patient. There is similarly no room in the model for everyone responsibility for himself and that's all... to say such people, “Here are your rights; now you may press a claim against doctor in whose care you placed yourself or waive your right, just as you please.” The relationship between doctor and patient is appropriately one of trust, while this remedy implies the absence of trust”.²⁵

The other individual right seen as problematic for Wolgast was children's rights. Wolgast criticized placing children's rights at the center of parent's and children's relationship. According to her, this kind of relationship is similar to the patient and doctor relationship. One participant is described as the complainant and the other is described as the defendant. Children's rights are asserted against parents if they violate these rights. As Wolgast put forward, “making the child and parent adversaries, encouraging the one to claim its rights against the other, is hardly a good way to pursue this interest”.²⁶ Wolgast claimed that moral teaching, especially knowing and practicing virtues, plays a key role in developing children's moral development. As reference to Ancient Greek philosophers, she asserted that the formal language of moral imperatives, such as rights of children, is not enough to change and improve children's social and moral life. Based on these considerations, she put forward the following:

“It needs a personal acquaintance with such feelings as humiliation, anger, desire for revenge, guilt, self-criticism and remorse. Otherwise, we have only formulas, descriptions, second-hand judgments, and

²⁴ Wolgast, 34.

²⁵ Wolgast, 36.

²⁶ Wolgast, 38.

with these alone, can we understand other people and their deeds in their full connection to each other? We cannot".²⁷

This view on children's moral development is directly related to being a virtuous person and developing a sense of justice. Rules and laws only command the actions that we do and don't do in society as citizens, but learning and improving moral behaviors makes children and citizens both responsible and caring persons. As noted above, Wolgast tended not to see individuals as self-independent, self-contained, autonomous, and self-interested, which is described and depicted by social atomism. Instead, she saw individuals as part of society in which their moral and social life were developed. In that regard, she made society as whole responsible for morally and legally bad actions. She asserted that "When someone does wrong, moreover, it is not a matter of his owing only the person who loses or suffers. There is a loss to the community as well, in its security and its moral atmosphere, if you will".²⁸

Finally, women's rights were also considered as problematic for Wolgast. She explained her critique through an example of "maternity leave". Maternity leave is given to mothers who have a newborn baby. This is defined as a woman's right in the law. According to Wolgast, if we follow the individual rights from the point of view of social atomism, then an injustice has been made toward men. She clarified her critique as follows:

"The argument that the right to a maternity leave is a special and unfair right of women unless it is extended and adapted to men is a consequence of individualism and language of equal rights. In this case, it puts men in the position of jealous siblings, watching for any sign of partiality shown to others. They are in the position of competing with pregnant women for favorable treatment, and in this instance, they show a blind disregard for the realities of childbirth".²⁹

From the above quote, it seems clear that the language of rights creates an unfair relationship between men and women. It also gives rise to jealous feelings between them. Keeping mind in that critique on individual rights, Wolgast's critique on patient's, children's, and women's rights will now be

²⁷ Elizabeth H Wolgast, Innocence, *Philosophy*- Vol 68:265, 1993, 301-302.

²⁸ Elizabeth H Wolgast, Intolerable Wrong and Punishment, *Philosophy*- Vol 60:232, 1985, 165.

²⁹ Wolgast, 1987, 14.

elucidated in the following paragraphs. As Wolgast pointed out that the doctor-patient, child-family, and man-women relationships are more complex and need other types of relationships. Self-interested and autonomous individual and rights are not appropriate in that context.³⁰ In order to make clear Wolgast's argument, it is necessary to explain why she gave prominence to the concept of care and responsibility rather than self-interest. There is an important difference between a caring-responsible person and a self-interested person. Care and responsibility refer to the dependence of people on each other. Moreover, these concepts contribute to the emotional life of a person and if the person feels that they belong to a family or community that cares for them. Individualism as social atomism assimilates all relationships and reduces them to a kind of relationship that places the self-interested person, who only considers his/her own interests, at center. Moreover, individualism ignores and rules of the concept of care and responsibility that are highly important for a genuine relationship. Wolgast put forward this deficiency in individualism as social atomism as follows:

"In the atomistic model connections of responsibility or dependence don't appear; there aren't any. In the same way molecular theory cannot allow that some molecules take care of others or defer to them. The language of rights reflects the atomistic fact that relations of individuals to one another are relations between autonomous entities who are peers. And these peer-relations give rise to contracts in which both parties pursue their self-interest".³¹

From this consideration, espousing individualism in the field of politics does not solve political problems and creates some injustices. Besides that, Wolgast saw individualism as problematic because of its emphasis on the self-independent and self-interested individuals who are autonomous and moral agents in their life. The problem about this definition is that it encourages pluralism as valuable and justifiable doctrine, but it does not accept or respect any cultural practices or religious commands that are against individual rights and the liberal system. There is always a potential conflict between individual rights and the demand of people who defend and want to follow cultural and religious practices, even though they are against the language of rights. As a matter of fact, a person who wants to follow religious or cultural practices in

³⁰ Wolgast, 43.

³¹ Elizabeth H Wolgast, *Wrong Rights, Hypatia*- Vol 2:1, 1987, 30-31.

public space sometimes goes against individualistic and liberal society.³² It is important to note here that there are many issues, such as marriage between homosexuals and euthanasia, that are rejected and against Christian and Islamic moral teachings. Opposing these rights is against the individualistic and liberal society. In theory, individualism promises important rights, but in practice it results in many political problems. This philosophical thought is mainly experienced and defended by the United States of America. If we look at the situation in this country in terms of justice, we face many injustices. As Eugene Goodheart pointed out “equality and the consequent freedom of the individual to pursue his own interests hardly cover the experience of Blacks, Hispanics, and women, nor does the politically influential presence of religion in American life exemplify liberalism”.³³

All of the above-mentioned critiques do not reject the benefits and importance of individual rights when facing real injustices in real life. The main idea behind these critiques shows that starting from individualism, in order to organize and govern society, is deficient and problematic. In addition to individual rights, it is necessary to reconsider individuals and society in a holistic way, not an atomistic way.

Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed to illuminate Wolgast’s critique on individualism as social atomism. Wolgast’s critique is mainly focused the definition of individual by Hobbes and Locke. These philosophers were identified as the founders of individualism as social atomism for Wolgast. Although Wolgast’s critique of Hobbes and Locke as a social atomist theorist is very important and fundamental, it is a one-sided critique for us. It is very clear and understandable in Wolgast’s critique that Hobbes introduced and defended social atomism, but Hobbes’ political philosophy comprises other aspects apart from that idea. As Cohen pointed out, Hobbes’ political philosophy is based on not only social atomism, but also on the concept of glory, which was taken by Ancient Greek political thought. Cohen claimed that Hobbes, as a psychological egoist, has three principals when explaining human nature. These principles are

³² Elizabeth H Wolgast, *The Demands of Public Reason*, *Columbia Law Review*- Vol 94:6, 1994, 1949.

³³ Eugene Goodheart, *Individualism versus Equality*, *Salmagundi*- No: 172, 2012, 143.

“competition, diffidence, and glory”. For Cohen, Hobbes took the idea of glory, which characterizes human nature for him, from the Ancient texts of Thucydides and Aristotle. This concept is an important virtue and vice of human life for both of these thinkers.³⁴ Besides that, Wolgast’s critique of Locke as a social atomist theorist is problematic. Like her critique on Hobbes, it is one-sided for us. As Alzate pointed out, Locke defends society, not only in an individualistic sense, but also the other aspects of human beings, such as religion. According to Alzate, religion is the most important thing that bounds society together in Locke’s political philosophy. In addition to individualism, religion also plays a key role in tying individuals together in a decent society in Locke’s political philosophy.³⁵ Wolgast’s critique is one-sided with regard to her interpretation of Hobbes and Locke, but she gives us a fundamental and systematic critique. For this reason, in order to think critically on individualism, we should reconsider our views of individualism, especially about some of the injustices that emerge from that view.

³⁴ G. A. Cohen, *Lectures on the History of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 2014), pp.68-69.

³⁵ Elissa B. Alzate, “From Individual to Citizen: Enhancing the Bonds of Citizenship Through Religion in Locke’s Political Theory”, *Polity*, Vol: 46, No: 2 (2014): pp.218

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