

**THE SECRET ASPECTS OF DEMOCRACY AND THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA**

## DEMOKRASİNİN GİZİL YÖNLERİ VE ETİYOPYA ÖRNEĞİ

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper includes a collection of accounts from leading scholars who conceptualized democracy. The paper displays various aspects of democracy including its effects on the social, political, economic and cultural progression of developing countries. The paper forwards the already-adapted points of discussion along with the secret aspects of democracy that are not clear for many. It is not possible to restrict the concept of democracy, and it is not fair to impose a democratic model that is enforced by a global system of regimes. As described by Abraham Lincoln, democracy is the government of people for the sake of people and ruled by people themselves. It is a system of governing whose concepts differ from place to place, from time to time and from person to person. Systems of governments, by no means, will be the same in all aspects. From this point of view, the paper sheds light on the ancient and Islamic practices of democracy, as well as the indigenous democracy of Africa through the case of Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Antiquity, Islam, Africa, Ethiopia**ÖZ**

Bu çalışmada, ilk olarak, demokrasi kavramı üzerine fikir serdeden öncü bilim insanlarının argümanları derlenmiştir. İkincil olarak, demokrasinin bütün yönleriyle ele alınması amaçlanmıştır; özellikle de gelişmekte olan ülkelerin sosyal, siyasal, ekonomik ve kültürel ilerlemeleri üzerinde demokrasinin ne tür etkilerinin olduğu tartışılmıştır. Tartışma, demokrasinin geri planda kalan yönleri üzerinden daha ileri bir noktaya taşınmıştır. Çalışmanın temel iddiası, demokrasinin tek bir kavramsal çerçeve ile sınırlandırılmasının mümkün olmayacağıdır. Bu bakımdan küresel siyasal sistemin bir demokratik model empoze etmesi adil değildir. Abraham Lincoln'ün tanımladığı şekliyle demokrasi, "halkın halk tarafından halk için yönetilmesini" öngörür. Demokrasi, bu anlamda kavramsal olarak mekândan mekâna, zamandan zamana ve kişiden kişiye farklılaşabilecek bir yönetim sistemidir. Kısacası, hükümet sistemleri bütün yönleriyle birbirinin aynısı olmayacaktır. Çalışmada antik çağlardaki ve İslam'daki demokrasi tecrübeleri analiz edildikten sonra Etiyopya vakası üzerinden Afrika'ya özgü demokrasi anlayışı ele alınacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Demokrasi, Antikite, İslam, Afrika, Etiyopya

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## INTRODUCTION

For centuries, the chain of dialogues is trying to dig around problems that cause long-term problems and block them from the eyes. The density of the rubble and the expulsion of habit and the outsize of their scope are thought to become forgotten and neglected. Perhaps, the most important of these problems which is the hardest and fossilized one is the problem of “democracy”. The notion that democracy could have a secret background might at first seem strange to many readers. Of course, the background has become so standardized; it is so familiar and becomes to be very complete to the extent it is so difficult to believe that it could hold any secret what so ever.

Defining democracy is not the concern of this paper. Because there are too many definitions of democracy and too many disagreements over how we measure the success of democracy and its failures. The paper documents imperfections and deeply “secret” mysteries of democracy to forward readers to an appropriate democratic approach.

Democracy has passed generally two birth ages: the older and the newer. Democracy was practiced for the first time as a system of government in Athens and Spain during the fifth and fourth centuries BC (the University of California, 1957). That democracy was a general assembly government system. Citizens used to consult on all matters of government, such as the election of the leaders, the promulgation of laws, the supervision of their implementation and the imposition of sanctions on violators. The legislative, executive and judicial powers had been divided into the following bodies: the People's Assembly, the House of Representatives and the People's Courts. The rule of the people was directly applicable, and the term “people's rule” (Lomperis, 2000) was applied directly and fully.

In the newer age of democracy, Europe was swimming in the system of feudalism. It had been ruled for more than a thousand years under the Roman Empire and Roman law. As Europe believed in Christianity, Christianity did not change the reality of life regarding legislative and legality. As a result, the Christian clergies practiced injustice and tyranny towards the European peoples under the feudal system. And the tyranny of the church was not the people of value or weight, people were subjected to the worst forms of injustice and tyranny.

The people were suffering from the injustice and tyranny of kings and princes who exercised despotic rule based on the theory of divine authority invented to justify their absolute authority. The theory says that kings derive their authority from God's mandate, whether directly or indirectly. The injustice of feudalism and the Church was a double burden for Europeans. As a result of the accumulated grievances, the French Revolution erupted and the slogan was hoisted: "Hang the last king with the bow of another priest". Europe has ridden itself of the injustice of feudalism, princes, kings, and clergy, but has replaced the unjust system of government that had been on its chest for centuries with another regime, 'the democratic system' which was originated from Greco-Roman heritage.

### **PRE-ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY**

Studies about democracy give a strong emphasis on the succession of Greeks. This is because, after the Athens revolution, they give at least administration for their societies. A lot of books were written after the 5th century BC (Isakhan, 2015). The most popular writers like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates (in his later works), Xenophon, Thucydides, and Pseudo-Xenophon (the old oligarch) seem to have viewed democracy as a tool of governments to cheat their citizens. These scholars see Athenian democracy as being very far from political thoughts. They tried to show their democratic utopian models. Despite their contradictions of Greek democracy, they believed Athenians were able to invent at least that type of advanced democracy. This was noted by the 5th and 6th centuries- historian Thucydides (460/55-400 BC).

Aristotle (384-322 BC) noted non-Greeks are by means of natural character extra slavish than Greeks that they tolerate master-like rule without resentment (Aristotle, 1981). The real story of the classical democracy of Greece started the aristocracy of Athenians' mandates about 508 BC when they tried to decentralize their political system. The politician was the first to bring the 'rule by people' a model of governance that known as demokratia. His model was measured by the Athenian assembly. This assembly was a decision-maker on war, peace, treaties, finance, legislation, and public works. The whole governmental activities were open for the assembly (Finley, 1973, pp. 18-19). What is interesting in the Greek democracy was (even though females were not

participants) all adult males were encouraged to attend assemblies that held about 40 times a year with 6000 members.

This was not a democracy because the vast majority of Greek citizens were not participants. They were required only to listen and vote. Few elites or wealthy and educated people made pre-organized speeches and proposed the next motions. That was why most decisions and proposals were faced with protests and laughter. As Hansen states, the above problem with together one-directional communication was real in Greek state (Hansen, 1999 ).

With its drawbacks and merits, the Greek Assembly was not the first to stand ancient world democracy. Before the Greek model dating back 2000 years, we can find Middle Eastern Assemblies similar to that of Greeks. The middle Easterners convened to make decisions on issues like, irrigation projects, trade missions, administration issues, land surveying and to judge citizens' offenses or any sovereignty threats (Jacobsen, 1957).

But even the assemblies of the Middle East like the Athenians were influenced and communicated by most sophisticated wealthy members. The most attractive assembly was seen in the ancient Israelites. The book of "Exodus" states Israelite leaders such as [prophet] Moses were nominated a 'mandate' coming directly from God which was accepted by the assembly of elders (Mullen, 1980). Even though the Old Testament was later changed by some selfish individuals who want to dominate the majority of Israelites, the whole part consisted of real democracy. Still, it contains verses that suggest the most sophisticated democracy terms. The verses were both political and religious concepts of the periods of Israelites' history (Wolf, 1947).

## **DEMOCRACY IN ANCIENT ATHENS**

Regarding justice and laws, the democracy of that time consisted of justice and equality before the law. Aeschines, the great orator (397-322 BC) stated 'democratic cities are governed by the established laws'. All citizens are obliged to obey the laws we have established and to punish those who do not obey over laws (Aeschines & Fisher, 2001). In Thucydides rendering of Pericles funeral speech, Pericles stated 'everyone is equal before the law' (Thucydides, 1858). Such equality and justice were somewhat seen in the Athenian governmental systems. It was functioned as a court of

law to solve many complex social problems. The approximate democracy used to work up to the first half of 4thc. After that, it was dealt out.

Indeed, if offenses that needed the death penalty, occurred in the society, all citizens had the right to decide in the assembly before they could be executed. Later, they established the judicial system which was far from the assembly; after 362 BC; this system was no longer functional as a court of law (Hansen, 1999 ).

Classical Athens was usually judged to be democratic to put their leaders to power. They used to show hands to do that. But an exact count of the vote was not taken. The scope was changed in the 4th century when the Athenian Assembly was required to follow the people's court (Hansen, 1999 ). Moreover, the assembly was required to elect a few citizens to vote for the power; about 500 Jurists and Legislators were elected to put them for important governmental positions. This gave every citizen more chance to be elected by lot for short-term governmental positions (Easton, 1970). What made these elections near to democracy was, elected representatives were given limited powers. They were under control of the citizens and would remain at positions for no longer than a year.

The basis of the Athenian democracy was personal democracy and non-questioned equality of all Athenians. According to Aristotle, democracy was not measured only by personal freedom and non-restricted equality but also relating these freedoms and equalities to the principles of justice and of the rule of law is crucial.

We can see that even though Aristotle advocates this idea, he was forced to concede that stating individuals' freedom and equality provided necessary conditions for personal liberty (Aristotle, 1981). From this, anyone can understand that equality and liberty are the bedrock of democracy. The two features of democracy were seen in respecting basic rights -freedom of speech. This was known as Isegoria to mean freedom of voice about one's concern in front of their fellow citizens. But it is unlikely each person had the opportunity of practicing his or her right regularly. But at least, isegoria was beyond the assembly that it gave citizens freedom of speech in everyday life.

The positive aspects of Athenian democracy are (Plato, 1956):

- Assembly system

- Juridical system
- Sophisticated elective practice
- Fundamental beliefs in ideas of freedom and equality
- negative aspects of the Athenian democracy:
- Exclusion of the majority of the people from the democratic process.
- Limitations of citizens
- Age (adults), gender (male), ancestry (Athenians), military service (completed military training) and birth (only freeborn people, not slaves or children of slaves).

### **DEMOCRACY IN PHOENICIA, VENICE, ICELAND AND ANCIENT CHINA**

We see the political and cultural situations in Eastern Mediterranean areas before the Athenian government, we can get evidence the society had established rules and laws to govern its day to day activities. Simon Hornblower says ‘The Phoenicians ... had something comparable to the self-regulating city-states or polis [and there is] the possibilities of Phoenician origins for the Greek political arrangements we most admire. Scientific study in the area has, however, hardly begun’ (Hornblower & Dunn, 1992, p. 2).

The city-state based on Phoenician civilizations was seen in Eastern Mediterranean like Sidon, Tyre, Byblos, Awar, Beirut, and Ugarit around present-day Lebanon. It is believed that Phoenician, from 1550-300 BC, created huge mercantile, culture probably circumnavigated Africa more than 2000 years before Vasco de Gama (Herodotus, 1996[460 BC]:42 Phoenicians contributed, to some extent, by developing modern democracy for the first time. Their king had civic and commercial powers as well as religious responsibilities. His wealth and power were great in Sidon.

Marin Bernal debated about the origin of democracy. He believed that the Phoenicians were not the first origin of democracy. His book “Black Athena Series’ points out possible ‘Afro-Asiatic’ roots to classical Greek society (Bernal, 2020) and strongly argued that before Greeks, Egyptians were the root of civilization.

In 2009, it was a media talk that Iceland would join the European Union, when the commissioner, Olli Rehn, welcomed the possibility membership, he connected the issue by one the oldest

democracies in the world (Traynor, 2009). When Icelanders were taken by the king of Norway, the king gave them a newly codified law-book in 1271. The scholars of the 19th century believed that the Iceland people had developed their roots from Scandinavian societies backed to the 13th century (Lund, 1995). The medieval Iceland society said to be practiced democracy. But with question: medieval Iceland democracy?

The politics of Europe was hierarchical and monarchical, feudal, brutal and unfair in the 5th and 13th century AD that is from the fall of Rome to the stirrings of Renaissance. Venice practiced democracy, flourished the “dark Age” economically and intellectually with an oligarchy system of government and sometimes autocratically which kept the Greek and Roman democratic citizenship alive.

In Venice, even though there were critics about the system, people lived with sovereignty and enough democratic. During the 17th century Venice started to collapse and a loose coalition of small towns, the so-called Venetian in plural form (Norwich, 2003).

As Venetian state mythology claims, the politics were changed in 697 as a result of a cruel order of anarchy, oppression, and bloodshed conflicts family against family, clan against clan... etc. (Hazlitt, 1886). While Venice was democratic in its earlier, the rest of Europe was feudalism, and later aristocratic. Venice showed some ideal democracy in that, there was an accommodation between people and power, citizens and oligarchs. Venice showed that democracy is more than smooth relations between the circulating elites and the will of the citizens.

China was ruled by autocracies. Emperor Wu (156-86 BC) ruled it by Confucianist state ideology until the fall of Confucian monarchy in 1911. Confucian philosophy was the result of “100 schools of thoughts” of warring states Era. The warring era was an ideological ferment to get peace and order during a political Confucian (Schrecker, 2004).

In China, the political movement occurred from 500 to 200 BC stands for a revolution which was a transition from feudalism to a rule by non-hereditary bureaucrats. In China, there was a concept known as the “mandate of heaven” which was almost an ancient idea of democracy. Its origin located 31 centuries ago, (1122 BC), it was used by Zhou rebels as a justification replacing the

Shang state (Schrecker, 2004). This is the nature of human beings struggling for freedom and peace is natural. Democracy in China was believed as a result of the unwillingness of intellectual reformers. Today, Beijing tries to mimic western-styled ‘democracy and human rights.’ But as historians displayed, the indigenous traditional democracy was a better chance. As Sylvia Chan stated Chinese society is so penetrated by the state and so fragmented that it is not a united for vis-à-vis the state (Chan, 1998).

## DEMOCRACY IN ISLAMIC WORLD

This part of the paper provides greatly needed textual and historical pieces of evidence to display some underlying principles of democracy as found in Islam. There must be a clear noting here that Islam does not use the term “democracy” but it consists of all principles of democracy. Since Islam precisely discusses all necessary things of life, there is no any important thing which not touched by Islam. Democracy, with its necessary faces, is also explained in Islam more than in human-made literature.

It is necessary to point that I have tried to revise the Jewish and Christian religions if there is any democracy principle there. Frankly, I have not found “democracy” aspects like what is in Islam. What I understood that there is a human-interference in these religions that changed their natures. All religions originated from the Creator of the world with the same doctrine but when human beings changed the truth, the next one was revealed until the last revelation, which is Islam.

It should be noted that there is a big difference between expressions “democracy in Islam” and “Islamic democracy”. The former shows democracy as part of the concerns of Islam which I want to say. But I don’t use them later because it leads to incorrect conception. It gives a meaning “Islam uses the term as it is” which is unreal. If Islam used it as it is, there would be a similarity between Islamic concerns and the western ones which are no way to say like that. To discuss democracy in Islam, let’s bear mind the aspects of western democracy. Different scholars have different aspects but the followings are, if not all, to some extent, common for all:

- Free and fair election
- Responsive government



- Fundamental rights of citizens
- Equality among citizens
- Participant citizens in decision making.
- Openness of the government for its people

As anyone can understand, these aspects concern only with political issues. They don't go through beyond that. The above six aspects are discussed directly or indirectly, as parts not as a whole, in Islam. Islam strongly concerns with the above *aspects* and there are *additional*, if necessary we can call them, “*democracy*” aspects in Islam which are known as ‘*Maqasid al-sharia*’:

- **Preservation of life:** human beings must reproduce to have continuity in this world. The governance with “democracy” does not talk about the preservation of life.
- **Preservation of wealth:** human beings must work, make a transaction, forbidden to steal or cheat others property, struggle to accumulate wealth in the right way. Islam strongly concerns not only setting up laws of work and transactions but also focuses on taking measures against he or she who disobeys these laws here and in the Hereafter. We can not get such a strong concern in western ‘democracy’.
- **Preservation of faith:** the natural belief must survive according to the declaration from Almighty Creator. This is not part of the so-called “western democracy”. It does not care whether a person will be successful not in the Hereafter. But Islam teaches how to be the best believer and guides towards that.
- **Preservation of intellect or faculty of reason:** the mind must be preserved, taking mind-affecting things is seriously forbidden. Protection of one's mind is the great concern of Islam because the human being is the representative of the Almighty Creator. To be representative means to be a builder or constructor of the world, not destroyer. To be so, there must be a pure mind that is not affected by any addictions like Intoxicant, smoking, or any other anesthetics or drugs. This is not the concern of any worldly “democracy”. It is only concerned with Islam.
- **Preservation of progeny or offspring:** there must be the right offspring of the human being. This world must be preserved by a true offspring otherwise the next generation will not get the opportunity to live. The world will be destructed or destroyed if bad offspring use it. Constraint of natural resources will be the worst. Islam makes a great account of the

next generation. In this sense, we can say, there is a full democracy in Islam that concerns the rights of both present and future generations.

Islam puts from the beginning all necessary principles and guides how to govern people. All required procedures are clearly explained in the Wholly *Quran* and *Sunah* (anyone can refer to these two roots of Islam). There must be a free election of leaders. Those who are loyal to their society elect a responsible leader not in sense of completion but in to serve the society. Under this, we can put all the “western democracy” principles with necessary corrections. All these principles have laws and rule on how to protect, and the practicality of these principles is always a concern of Islamic laws.

The intensive contribution of Islamic civilization has built humanity, especially in fields like; science and knowledge, democracy, astronomy, physics and mathematics, computer science ...etc. Unfortunately, these contributions are not always associated with Islam. From the western point of view, because of ignorance and other reasons, Islam is predominant that Islam is antithetical to democracy. Few western writers portray Islam as a radical, fundamentally non-democracy, poses a threat for the next generation of the west ...etc. Martin Kramer, who offers Muslims, appeals to democratic principles “bear no resemblance to the ideals of European’s democracy movement (Ismaeilian, 2006). Bernard Lewis, who certifies Islam as compatible to democracy but it manifests itself politically (Lewis, 1993). The writings of these ‘scholars’ try to exclusively ignore relations between the history of democracy with Islam. Indeed, reviews of the major works on the history of democracy show that Islam is rarely considered in studies of democracy. For instance, John Dunn revised democracy from 508 BC to 1993 AD in his book of “Democracy: the unfinished journey, 508 BC to 1993 AD” and later “Democracy: A history “in his both works, he did not mention Islamic democracy (Hornblower & Dunn, 1992). Such a legacy of ignoring Islam’s democracy is common in recent works that examined the global spread of democracy. The same is true in the book “democracy in developing countries” which studies democracy in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Fortunately, some real scholars put realities as they are. They do look at facts and put them to readers.

Among scholars who worked on the origin of democracy that acknowledge Islam for its contributions for development of democracy is Harlord Rogers, an America writer of “The history of democracy from the middle east to the western civilization” which reveals democracy in Muslim countries but does not make reference of deep historical root of Islamic democracy (Rogers, 2007). Harford graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. Another acknowledgement of Islam for its contribution to the development of democracy is shown in John Kean’s work. He explains huge engagements with the democratic legacy of Islam (Keane, 2009).

In the 17th century, when Europeans were in their “dark age” the Muslim world had been liberated from tribalism by Islam and the countries were in new social, cultural, political orders; consuming social justice, equality, and the rule of law and other principles which serve as basis for the first democratic system of governance. This democracy was raised when Messenger Mohammed (P.U.O.H) was sent to be a leader for mankind (622-32).

Equality is one of the fundamental principles of democracy which is articulated within Islamic doctrine. Islamic democracy has 4 main characteristics:

- **Legal Equality:** all humans are equal are afforded basic rights, life, and property protections regardless of color, race, and religion.
- **Judicial equality:** grants all humans access to courts for fair treatment and hearing, regardless of race, color, religion again.
- **Equality of leadership opportunity:** anyone can be offered opportunity according to his/ her qualification.
- **Equality in the domain of religious rights and obligations.**

These principles are the bedrocks of Islamic laws that are required to be fulfilled by all followers (men and women) equally to perform religious duties. These basic democratic principles of Islam are also embedded into Islamic doctrine where the Noble Quran recognizes equality and condemns any type of discrimination and prejudices that base on racism, tribalism, and religion (Quran,49:13,2:256,17:70).

The same is true in the Hadith which is the second source of legislation. The Messenger (P.U.O.H) announces pure principles of equality in that He says “All people are the children of Adam, and

Adam was from dust.” (Hadith, 4900). The Messenger used to participate in any social, economic, cultural and political affair equally with common people of his time regardless of his position (Būfī, 2001). Non-Muslims (Jewish of Medina, Christians of Najran, Zoroastrians of Hajar and pagans) were treated equally during the Messenger times (Būfī, 2001).

The general view of western scholars towards Islam is the exclusion of its concepts of rights and freedoms. This is, I think, because of their ignorance of Islam and the deviation between Islam and them. They are always measuring Islam through the head crafts of women and like. They do not have eyes to look at the fundamental basis of democracy in Islam.

The fundamental issues which made the western democracy (constitutionalism) differ from Islamic democracy are:

- In the western context, rights were established out of constitutionalism as a result of a continuous struggle between the states and individual rights and liberties.
- In Islam, rights form states. The rights save human life, dignity, and property.
- The rights are ensured in the Quran from the outset.

According to Islamic democracy the main responsibility of authorities is ensuring :

- promotion of public benefits
- prevention of harm done to people
- fundamental rights to live (life, justice, equality before the law, protection of property and dignity; privacy, freedom, movement)

The west presented the fundamental rights in a single document whereas, in Islam, these rights are part of the whole writings of scholars and jurists. M. Hashim Kamali tries to illustrate freedom by quoting from Islamic sources as capacity of a person to explain or do according to his or her interest, or to avoid so, with no violating theirs (Kamali, 2002).

Remember that during the prophet’s era, people or individuals used to question The Prophet on any aspect of life and various matters of faith. He did not only welcomed their practices but also encouraged it despite the harshness of some approaches. This freedom was continuing up to the Abasiyan dynasty. But today it is in Islam without practice.

Women used to enjoy a higher range of rights to express their views. This was despite prevailing contrary to cultural norms and practices. They used to gather with The Messenger, ask him freely, and practice. Even after His demise, women practice full freedoms. Remember the case where a woman openly and freely stood in the mosque to object to Omer over bridal money issues.

According to Islamic laws, any Muslim of religion can be the leader of the Muslim community if elected by the community with qualifications. Only minority Shiites argue that leaders must be from al-lbeyt (The Prophet's family). The monarchy system of some Islamic countries does not represent the Islamic democracy system. What I want to reveal is leader election processes to the dominant Islamic perspective rely on collective encouraging of the citizens, treated as equal participants of Islamic states.

Democracy is characterized by sovereign people with freedom and equality. It is safely possible to argue that Islam can offer theories and practices consistent with real democracy. As a conclusion, without any doubt, the present 'democracy' is being designed by western political thought. It is and re-established and institutionalized to get good governance and quality for the rule of law. Regrettably, the principles and institutions of democracy are always manifested as they were exclusively innovated by the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman heritage. But deep and objective research of Islam, historically, textually, and logically disproves such a hypothesis. Islam, as a religion and civilization, offered inherent innovations and principles for all fields of studies. Principles of democracy are properties of Islam from the very beginning.

The Prophet and Rashidun eras are the most golden epochs for all Muslims and fair non-Muslims. They are eras of pure Islamic teachings and very democratic administrative systems. Aspects of democracy like equality, freedom of speech, political participation, sovereignty, safeguarded life standards ... etc were seen practically. Certainly, one can say Islam supplied the world with basic theories and principles which consistent with all aspects of life. Democracy was born and brought up in Islam; then went to the west to change its shape. It is every Muslim's responsibility to show the world the real history of democracy with new readings instead of running behind fluctuating 'fabricated democracies' like the tail of a cat. And again instead of begging democracy from others

where democracy is not a gift to do so. The western ‘democracy’ is not consistent with Islam and Muslims except some aspects of it.

## **INDIGENOUS DEMOCRACY OF AFRICA**

When the elusive concept is debated in the context of Africa the above discourse becomes more challenging. “from the era of Slave Trade”, through the age of what Africa and Africans have been said not to have or not to be, is a pretty extensive list” and high on that list is democracy (Achebe, 1993).

It is believed that Africa had no practice of democracy until “the Western came with democracy”. This concept is used by the West as a political instrument to exploit resources of the continent. Even though most of the democratic exercises were not perfect, the concept of democracy in Africa was better than that of the western ones before they penetrate to the continent. African nation-states were somewhat democratic comparing to the west. The west democracy began after the bloodshed French revolution<sup>3</sup> in the 18th century but in Africa, nation-states used to practice day-to-day activities including tribal group leaders’ elections peacefully until the entrance of the ‘western democratic’ system-which led to a genocide of millions of Africans.

A lot of challenges to the African nation-states democracy were recorded. Among them, deep-seated ethnic rivalries, western interference, bad leadership and economic inequalities (Chege, 1995). The worst one is western interference which still controls indirectly or directly the continent. At the time of colonialism, the west used to travel for exploiting natural resources from Africa. Today, selfish leaders submit these resources to get only private positions; not for their people. This results in imposing policies on the citizens regardless of common interest. This problem with together the following two misconceptions prevent African nation-states from democratic administrations system:

- Africans do not know the concept of “democracy” means.
- Democracy is a concept given to nations that are not familiar with it.

Thanks to Claude Ake, for writing “Democratization is not something one people do for another; people must do it for themselves or it does not happen” (Ake, 1996). Studies are showing

democratic practices in Africa before the arrival of Europeans. These studies make the discourse that African nations did not know democracy before the arrival of colonizers very questioned. It is true to say many lawless tribes lived in this continent. But lawlessness for some tribes before modernization is a common character for the whole nations of the world. Even the ethnic groups of Africa had a concrete democratic system to govern their day-to-day life. This idea is supported by Joe Teffo as Africans used to live against their interest (Teffo, 2004).

Traditional African political systems were painted with democratic values. They were patrimonial, consciousness was communal (Ake, 1996:65). Remember, the Bantu socio-political administrative systems still in the kinship groups there is:

- Sense of security
- Belongingness
- Each person had a voice in social affairs
- Safeguarding each individual's identity and freedom.

Most tradition of African kinships was people-centered community institutions (Teffo, 2004). Members had freedom of voice directly or through representatives in the decision-making position. Most African empires, kinships, and leaders were characterized by, what we call today, democracy.

If we take leaders and kingdoms of democracy as an example, Axumite kingdom, Ashama (Nejashi), Imam Ahmed Ibrahim, Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole and Jemo Kenyata in East Africa, Ashanti, Oyo, Benin, Songhai, Mali, and Ngoni in west Africa; Muenemutapa in central Africa; and the Zulu in South Africa were best examples. By no means, all these socio-political administrative systems could be perfect democratic or ignorant of it. But they were better than today's democracy.

## **THE FLAWS OF MONITORY DEMOCRACY**

The world is being led by "monitory democracy". This part of the paper discusses the present day 'democracy' and how was it designed and changed from indigenous nature. Elites are always keeping their secret targets to shade their long-range plans. They put the world in a never-ending

fluctuation of random developments; unfortunately, they make us impair of sense of perspective, weaken our ability to sense the future.

Epochal changes occur and vibrate our standards of lives for decades through unstable democracy. The effect is more in countries that cannot decide how to fit life standards with such “democracy”. The huge cost is being paid by their citizens. There is no argumentation against this monitory democracy and conceptualization for those people because the democracy itself aids the only state and empowered them regardless of the nation under this state. The 20th-century representative democracy strikes nations especially those in developing countries. This is to advise our government to examine monitory democracy.

This paper is even against the so-called ‘liberal democracy’ or ‘western democracy’ because there are secret aspects that do not appropriate for countries like Ethiopia. The pivot point of the paper rotates around “Third Wave’ and the “End of History” which are ideas of Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama respectively. The most important focus is we are living in a historic new world taking us from ‘representative’ democracy to ‘monitory’ democracy. There may come another style tomorrow. So, can we rotate like a shadow around a tree with new secret agendas of some groups that always create mechanisms? Or shall we take measures for mutual benefits for our citizens?

Societies are being changed continuously following the border-cross settings of some domestic or international powers. The very serious feature of the situation is these changes are accelerated by media-saturated propaganda without any black through globalization. What makes the nations accept such cheatings? Differentiating the causes and causers of this monitory democracy adds at least awareness to shape our future lives in a style of benefit for us and the next generations. We can even overcome the coming style of democracy.

Monitory democracy can be described as “the most interactive, complex and dynamic form of democracy, a type of post-electoral democracy that has long-term consequences and disorientating effects upon political parties, parliaments, politicians, and governments.” (Keane, 2009, pp. 35–42). The rapid and huge transformation of ‘democracy’ can be expressed by ‘monitory’ democracy. It is possible to consider monitory democracy resulting from ‘post-electoral’ politics represented by different kinds of extra-parliamentary systems.



Power-scrutinizing techniques root in states, civil societies, and cross-border settings. As a result, they change governing styles. Consequently, elections, political parties, economic levels, parliaments, cultures, architectures, will be changed. In the name of democracy, monitors change and shape domestic and international lifestyles for the sake of specific interests. The independent monitors produce tangible results. What is more serious is these monitors are complicating our existence by keeping politicians, parties, and governments permanently in their interests. By doing so, agendas are implemented as they come through monitory democracy. No one can be sure whether such a problem long last or ended but we are sure it is the reciprocal of a historically developed democracy. By observing monitory democracy's dynamic natures and institutional contours, we can certainly judge that it is the most complex shape of democracy.

Among the mechanisms by which monitory democracy covers itself are terms: the public, public accountability, the nation, the people, the citizen, etc. These terms are the most powerful mechanisms to spread political organizations or NGOs and institutions anywhere in the world. There are election announcements, political parties, and legislatures in any country. But their positions are mostly valueless for public interest. If democracy was measured by simply handling powers, elections, confining territorial states, it would be alive in all countries without any questions and nations would never pay serious costs but democracy is beyond that in its real shape. It would be again described by the unrestricted will of the majority or minority.

Among the specific nature of monitory democracy, public participation, democratic accountability, and rules of representation are more widely implemented than ever before. This is happening because when monitory democracy was born in 1945, there was a birthing date of around one hundred sorts of power-scrutinizing organizations which were unknown in previous democracy. Since monitory Democrats are always talking about only its importance, awareness of nations about this democracy is very less. But how many citizens admit and believe? Why do people believe in simple propagandas which is sung in media?

Accused governments are always breaking the needs of societies using the rule of the majority principle. Representative democracy with together gazing at numbers of elections cannot bring real democracy. In other words, monitory democracy can never be the will of citizens.

Monitory mechanisms are not merely information-providers. They work in different aspects for different purposes.

Monitory democracy style is not going back to the Athenians democracy. But many temporary democracies speak as if they were Greeks as if they are real. But they are not (Fung and Wright, 2003:5). The real natures of such democracies are being dependent on representation in the name of people or citizen or democracy or human right or “democratic election...etc. In monitory age, every possible method may be used. In the election system, for instance, the secret ballot system is widely used. Women, youth, low literacy people and disable people neither are nor active participants.

Monitory democracy, by changing its shape, usually disturbs citizens' life to gain power. Look at the old eighteen-century old phrase “civil society”. This phrase is used by ‘monitory democracy’ all over the world. No matter to use the phrase but in the name of socializing citizens, governments control movements of people. Civil society is non-political orally. But practically, governments use the phrase for power-scrutinizing.

Another nature of monitory age, governments may scarify little for the society in the way of their strategies. Civil people may be massacred for the sake of politicians. Again another nature, if governments see some advantages of monitoring even on the costs of their society, they do not hesitate to do anything. They do not care for people. Representative war is the best example of this case.

Since real democracy is not measured by simple matters like simple talk of democracy on media, Islamic feminism, complaining and accusing real leaders, establishing NGOs or political institutions, society must struggle for real democracy. Understanding monitory democracy is the best mechanism to search for real democracy. Encouraging people to engage with indigenous norms and costumes is also helpful to develop democratic life. A state which tries to govern society by avoiding useful norms and diverse traditions is the one that represents monitory democracy. Real democrats always suggest their idea for citizens for discussion and accept suggestions because dictatorship is a symptom of monitory democracy. Interest groups by nature are tools of monitory

democracy. For the sustainability of a good democracy, society must understand these groups. This is not to mean all interest groups are like that but they are used widely for power-scrutinizing.

## DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA

*“We don’t have another choice than democracy in Ethiopia even if we don’t like it”,* said Meles Zenawi. This is the most fitting expression of the monitory democracy which is imposed on nations. The former prime minister of Ethiopia seemed to explain the imported foreign monitory democracy which is not useful for countries in general, for in Ethiopia specifically.

The Aksumite Empire was considered the first kingdom of Ethiopia. But there is no clear evidence whether it controls the whole present-day Ethiopia or not. What so ever, it was an ancient kingdom located in the present-day Eritrea and Tigray region of Ethiopia approximately 100 AD to 940 AD. This kingdom was founded by Sabaeans. But there was a Cushitic civilization established independently before the arrival of Sabaeans (Stuart Munro-Hay, 1991). There were lots of kings, Islam Sultanates, military juntas that ruled Ethiopia. This makes discussion of democracy so difficult to dedicate. But depending on domestic legends, literature, and international sources, we visualize the nature of democracy in Ethiopia. The ancient Athenian democracy was seen in the Era of king Ashama (Nejashi) because during the Muslim migrants, he reveals the issue for the society representatives. There is a good witness of foreigners for his justice. Revisions of Ethiopian history show that the other kings used to practice genocides. For instance, King Yohanis was accused of his genocide of 52000 Muslims in the Wollo region and king Minilik and 5000 people in Chelenqo-Harar. A similar situation was seen under Emperor Haile Selassie and President Mengistu Haile Mariam. After a long time of monarchic rule, Ethiopia was ruled by Emperor Haile Selassie. He was overthrown in 1974 after 44 years on the throne by the ‘Derg’ military junta ruled by Mengistu. This regime was strongly accused of genocide and dictatorship, marked by a devastating civil war that lasted for 17 years under the Marxist Derg of Mengistu Haile Mariam. After 1991, at the very beginning, there seemed real democracy in Ethiopia. Then, according to global changes, democracy seems to be directed to monitory one. Ethiopians welcomed this regime at the beginning but later there came complaining. For me, the party has to revise its policy again for smooth relations. Not only domestic policy revision but also foreign relations must be revised

to the extent if previous relations lead to national harm, the government should establish other relations that bring mutual benefit. Today, regardless of “recorded developments”, citizens always complain about the ruling party that it does not give them freedom of speech and equality. This may be a ‘bell of awaking’ for the ruling party to examine itself not to enter monitory democracy.

The government’s system has a ruling network that extends from federal to regional to *wereda* (district) and *kebele* (lowest administrative unit) levels. This network is used to mobilize rural voters and “monitor and control local communities” (International Crisis Group, 2009). This is a kind of monitory system. The Ethiopian government has to revise its democracy system. If we measure Ethiopian democracy, the “5:1 system” gathers information on the day-to-day activities of households and individuals leads to define our country as a “monitory democracy”. Human rights watch international crisis Group usually accuse Ethiopia that there is no freedom or it is so weak in the country (ICG, 2009).

We have seen that among monitory democracy, most Media are controlled by the state. In Ethiopia, most news media outlets controlled by the state, they even do not reach the whole citizens. According to the Welfare Monitoring Survey in 2011, just 38% of households owned a radio, 10% a television, and 25% a mobile phone (Central Statistical Agency, 2011). This is an indicator for the government to rearrange its policy. There must be more communication media companies and free presses. When this happens, there will be a better democracy. Comparing to other countries, the political awareness of citizens is very weak. The Ethiopian government should give mobilize the people.

The so-called ‘human right watch’ and other organizations claim Ethiopian government that Opposition parties managed to win only one legislative seat in Ethiopia’s 2010 parliamentary elections – and none in 2015 – and the election process was criticized by European Union and U.S. observers. This is an indicator of the arty to examine its election systems. Election systems are the main tools to measure monitory democracy. At least the Ethiopian state must not be accused of this democracy.

## CONCLUSION

The ancient democracy composed of natural democracy. It was the origin of today's "democracy" but in a different dimension. Islamic democracy clearly shows real democracy principles. The studies of Islam show that the parameters of democracy are electoral participation, justice, equality, liberty, and human rights.

A real democracy fulfills not only political scopes like elections, freedom of expression, etc. but also strongly aims at attaining society's benefits, welfares, advantages, and avoiding evils, losses, in ethical behaviors and activities. It always focuses on the protection of life, wealth, faith, intellect or faculty of Reason, Progeny or Offspring and deep practicality of these principles. Monitory democracy is not much concerned with these. Monitory democracy was born from a liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is in tension with itself because many shapes of democracy come out of it. It also concerns with problems and solutions. This is not more democracy; people need more than conflict resolutions. Liberal democracy seems not more than the majority rule which does not even constitute democracy. The majority rule is nothing but a tyrannical regime tool of controlling. Nazi Germany was the best example of liberalism. There is no real democracy in 51% percent election where 49 percent has no willingness. This all is a concern of liberal democracy. Its main aim is getting the hands of the vote. Democracy is beyond that. Liberal democracy focuses on the constitution (right to vote, right to form parties, freedom of the press and associational autonomy) and participation (fairness of the election, the extent of suffrage). These are the conceptual logics for this democracy.

Monitory democracy is characterized as representative. Developing countries are always victims of this democracy. This democracy, by nature, imposes policies on the nation inside or outside the state. Global politics is a feature of monitory democracy. This democracy can reach anywhere through new policies sometimes with internal organizations. It results in conflict between state and citizens because state officials move out of national interest to satisfy hidden agendas of their own or for another state.

Researches about present-day Ethiopian democracy suggest that there are gaps between the state-officials and the people. Political awareness of citizens is very weak. This, in turn, will affect the state. A good relationship between state and people is an indicator of political progress. Interactions

must not be ‘wolf and goat’ relationship. If there is good democracy, outcomes will be growth, stability and conflict resolution, long life of state, unity of state and citizens, sacrifice will come from citizens for their state. The governments must not use the term ‘democracy’ to cheat their people. Leaders have to search for the real methodology governing including real democracy. They must not follow the unstable concept ‘democracy’ which is reshaped by anyone according to his or her interests and attitudes. Moreover, it is usually fabricated like goods and services. This implies that ‘democracy’ from the perspectives of US, for instance, does not fit the politics in Ethiopia because social, political, economic and cultural situations are different in the two countries. That means realities in the two geographical locations are different. There must be a precise revision of the democracies to select the real ones which fit human nature.

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