

FROM CLASSICAL DEMOCRACY TO LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: DEFINITIONS, TYPES AND PARADIGMS

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This analytical-descriptive paper is written to re-examine and to study “democracy” critically, especially emphasizing “liberal democracy” as an attractive and acceptable concept in the system of political science field. Democracy has a long enough historical background and has undergone many historical transitions, transformations and developments. The academicians have verified different meanings for democracy, which have led to different definitions, types and paradigms for this terminology. Typology of democracy is the result of different theories, approaches, and attitudes toward it. Democracy, both in its classical and modern (liberal democracy) form, has some principles and indicators. Socio-political freedoms, equality of citizens in rights and privileges, regular holding of elections according to the law, establishment of government based on votes and separation of powers are the most important principles of democracy in its various forms. However, implementation of democracy depends on some conditions, but despite some defects and serious criticisms, it has some advantages and values which have caused it to be preferred over other methods of political orders. Democracy, as a method and structure of governance, is still an unfinished project that requires rethinking and deep considerations. Thus, the fluid and flexible concept and definition of democracy is compatible with different cultures, religions and societies, and, on this basis, we can talk about “Islamic democracy” and we can favour this vision as the findings of this research.

Keywords: *democracy, liberal democracy, Islamic democracy, conceptualization, typology, freedom, equality, election*

Introduction

Democracy is so dominant and has global popularity, acceptability and legitimacy, that even political opponents, at least theoretically, do not oppose it. Therefore, democracy as a method and model of governance is adopted more than any other form of governing. Democracy in its 2500 years of history has undergone various developments. In politics, democracy is a fundamental concept that has different definitions, views and types. Among various models of democracy, “liberal democracy” is the most important and modern type of democracy, which is combined from two concepts “democracy” and “liberal”. Liberal democracy contains the elements and values of democracy, and on the other hand, it includes the fundamental principles and indicators of the ideology of liberalism, too. Democracy has principles, indicators and conditions that the correct cognition of which helps to understand it well. Democracy, as one of the fundamental concepts of political philosophy and political jurisprudence, is a fluid and flexible concept that has the ability to be modified, modernized and completed along with social changes. Therefore, it is compatible with different cultures, ideologies and societies. The main question of the article is: What changes and developments has democracy gone through in the process of its evolution and progress, and what are its important theories and types? This article tries to study democracy in its two classical and liberal states and discusses the principles, values and viewpoints about it. This article is organized in two parts: (1) conceptualization and definition and (2) analysis and review.

1. Conceptualization and Definition

The Concept of Democracy: Definitions and Perspectives

During the last half century (or more), definition of democracy is facing several problems, because to analyze and interpret it, scholars have come across numerous meanings, sometimes even contradictory to one another. Although this word seems to be a simple and self-evident concept at the beginning, sometimes it is difficult to provide a clear definition of such simple and self-evident concepts. According to some researchers, “the most difficult tasks are defining simple concepts” (Enayat 1972: 12). Democracy is defined variously and different notions have been presented. Its literal and original Greek meaning is “rule by the people”. However, this meaning does not express all the dimensions and hidden angles of this term. Therefore, if we consider only the literal meaning of democracy, we will not acquire the main purpose of the topic. Because the main question in democracy is “avoiding dictatorship, or in other words, avoiding lack of freedom and avoiding a government that is not

governed by law” (Popper 1997: 88). Democracy is not restricted to this definition and is described as other meanings and definitions, too. Some consider it to be “based on respect for individual will and human dignity”, while others believe that “in democracy, we must disaffirm the identity of the individual and make society the basis, and by creating equality for all, we must eliminate any individual superiority” (Lacombe 2003: 17). As you observe, the first definition focuses on western comprehension of democracy, that is, liberal democracies, and the second definition focuses on the socialist analysis of democracy. Lacombe notes about these definitions that the first point of view emphasizes the priority of individual freedom in democracy, and the second viewpoint emphasizes universal and social equality. According to Lacombe, the concept of freedom forms the core definition of democracy, not equality. When the masses fight for the purpose of democracy, they think of freedom, not equality. Therefore, “equality” is a primitive form of democracy and “freedom” is the highest ideal form. Therefore, there is no democracy without freedom of the pen, speech, communities and political parties (ibid.: 18–25).

David Beetham, one of the political science professors at the University of Leeds, has also pointed to other meanings and examples (definitions) of democracy such as “government of people, government of public representatives, government of the public parties, rule of majority¹, dictatorship of proletariat, maximum political participation, competition of elites to win public votes, multi-party system, political and social pluralism, equal citizenship rights, civil and political liberties, free society, society civility, free market economy, everything we do in Britain (or America or anywhere else), ‘end of history’ and in short, everything spectacular and beautiful” (Beetham 2013: 12). Thus, as Beetham has pointed out, although some of these definitions overlap each other, and seem to have a common point, many of them are incompatible, because of containing strange meanings and terms. Among the various meanings of democracy mentioned in Beetham’s words, this article intends to discuss public government representatives, and the equal rights of citizens. According to Beetham, the main core of democracy is government of the people or public supervision on collective decisions, and the starting point of democracy is citizens, not government institutions (ibid.: 147). Perhaps by government of the people, Beetham means the rule of the people, or the rule of the public representatives or the rule of the elected representatives.

According to Norberto Bobbio, one of the 20th century Italian thinkers, democracy “in the most common sense refers to one of the possible types of

¹ The dominance of the majority over the minority, which was born in the context of classical democracy, is the result of this definition and characteristic of democracy; since, before the people implement and accept democracy as a form of government, the minority’s autocracy was ruling human societies.

government in which the power is not in the hands of one or a few people but of all or, to be more precise, the majority” (Bobbio, 1997: 15). The main point that Bobbio noticed is the trait of the power and dominance of the majority, against autocratic governments (individual government), and oligarchies (minority government). Thus, in general, democracy does not mean rule of the people, but rather rule of law and prevention of tyranny and dictatorship, i.e. the negation of tyranny and autocracy. According to Karl Popper’s definition, democracy did not mean “government of the people” in ancient Greece, either, as it does not mean so today. Therefore, the exact meaning of democracy is to oppose tyranny, dictatorship and denial of freedom (Popper 1997: 88).

In any case, especially in today’s world, democracy is one of attractive and popular concepts from the distant past. The desirability and attractiveness of democracy is mostly due to its opposite concept, i.e. the concept of dictatorship and tyranny (the divergence between democracy and dictatorship). Since people are displeased of tyranny and autocracy of the rulers, they embrace democracy. Of course, this feature of democracy should be seriously considered, which is not a small privilege and value. Therefore, consideration of many thinkers to democracy also provides the same justification. So, democracy in the sense of governing or “rule of people” is not accepted by great political scientists and philosophers and democracy, meaning the government of the people, was hated by many ancient Greek philosophers, including Plato. Because, according to him, “a large number of people, regardless of who they are, cannot have political insight or manage and lead the country wisely” (Copleston 2002: I/288). In Plato’s opinion, since common people do not have political knowledge of governance, they cannot establish a desirable government. Therefore, according to Plato, the government of majority is the worst type of government (ibid.: 269). Popper, the Austrian liberal philosopher, is also one of those who clearly rejects and does not accept democracy in the sense of people’s rule: “Democracy has never been the rule of the people, nor should it be” (Popper 1997: 115).

Therefore, contrary to common sense, democracy does not mean rule or sovereignty of the people, because in democracy, “the people” have never been and are not the ruler. So, democracy means a system aroused of public vote and based on law. It means a political system that guarantees the freedom and secures equality for human beings. On this base, civil and political freedoms, contribution to the power, equal rights of human citizenship and satisfaction, are elements that have always been emphasized by thinkers and politicians in democracy, especially in new democracies, as these indicators founded western democracy on liberalism. According to some authors, “the idea of freedom and equality in American and French revolutions, built the foundation of Western democracy on liberalism; because national sovereignty,

which was the main pillar of French Revolution, could also find an authoritarian and totalitarian foundation” (Naqibzadeh 2000: 8). On this basis, what democracy, both old and new, liberal and non-liberal, gives importance to, and considers a key element to, is the idea of freedom, equality and the rule of law. From the above arguments, we come to the conclusion that democracy is still an “intrinsically controversial concept” and there is basically no consensus on its definition (Beetham 2013: 13).

Since post-Renaissance period and formation of modernity paradigm, John Locke’s political philosophy established the most important foundation of modern democracy, because his views had an irreplaceable impact on founding democratic institutions in the West. Locke, the most prominent theorist and designer of the theory of democracy in modern West, believed that individuals are born with natural rights, including the right to life, the right to freedom, and the right to own property, and the government is organized for no other reason except to protect and maintain these rights. Therefore, whenever it stops playing its role, those who created and produced it can put an end to its existence (Mill 1990: 9). Locke believed that achieving this objective is possible in a parliamentary government based on votes of the majority and said that rejecting majority’s votes lead to either dictatorship or anarchy. Thus, Locke’s democracy is representative democracy, or in other words, the new liberal democracy, which enjoys worldwide fame and adoption today. The majority votes are an important principle in new democracies as it shows satisfaction of the majority of people too. Therefore, in the democratic system, majority’s consent and vote cannot be ignored as separation and exclusion of the minority is a problem. If a democratic society faces the threat of secession of the minority, actually the democratic regime is threatened and weakened. Abraham Lincoln is one of those who emphasized the matter, under influence of Locke’s theory: “If the minority does not obey the majority’s vote, the majority must force them, otherwise the government will no longer be a government; there is no other way. For the survival of government, one of the two sides must surrender. If, in such a case, the minority instead of surrendering separate, then separation may change to a tradition that will cause fracture in minority and destruction. Because within that minority, another minority will emerge, and if the minority does not consent to the rule of the majority, that minority will separate itself too” (Hampton 2000: 427). Therefore, for the establishment of democracy and its survival, people, groups and political parties must get prepared to lose elections. If political and rival groups admit the attitude that they can withdraw from the game when they lose the elections, the game will no longer last. Individual withdrawal from the democratic system is not a problem, but group withdrawal is challenging and threatening for the democratic system.

Another thinker who contributed to the development of modern democracy and had a special point of view is Montesquieu. Montesquieu believes: "In democracy, the nation is the ruler in one sense and the submissive in another sense. The nation cannot be a ruler except through its own votes, which are its will, so the will of the nation is the nation itself" (Montesquieu 1983: 94). According to Montesquieu, democracy must always avoid two extremes: "One is the spirit of inequality that pushes it toward aristocratic and authoritarian rule, and the other is the spirit of extreme equality that pushes it back to harsh tyranny; this tyranny will not disappear unless the foreign enemy prevails" (ibid.: 237). By the spirit of extreme equality Montesquieu means that the wise and the ignorant all become equal in every aspect of social life, this leads to anarchism and the tyranny of the majority, and in this way, the ignorant and submissive people may exclude the intellectuals and worthy ones from their social positions.

Will Durant is also one of those who does not regard democracy as positive. He believes that democracy provides the basis for abuse of wealthy and influential people. Will Durant analyses democracy as "the womb for upbringing the government of Influential lords" (Durant 2007). It seems that the most important defect of democracy is this problem i.e. influence of the "Influential lords", in the sense that, in suitable democratic environment, the government of Influential lords will emerge.

The Concept of Liberal Democracy: Definitions and Views

Liberal democracy is a political system that Western nations claim applying it and is a form of indirect democracy or representative democracy (Aghabakhshi & Afsharirad 2000: 324). Some Western experts have said that "liberal democracy means social democracy based on the capitalist market. Therefore, capitalism is the main feature of this system" (Macpherson 1993: 21). Therefore, we can say that liberal democracy is the same as representative democracy that has become more popular today; and refers to political systems in which the decisions affecting a community are not taken by all the members of that community, but are taken by those who are elected by the members of the community for this purpose. Therefore, countries where many voters can elect one from two or more parties and where the majority of the adult population has the right to vote are usually called liberal democracies (Giddens 2008: 612).

David Held, one of the prominent commentators of democracy, also described liberal democracy/representative democracy discussing forms of modern government. After constitutional and liberal government, he considers the third form of modern government as liberal or representative democracy. This

form of government (liberal democracy) is a system of government that includes elected “officials” who “represent” the interests or views of citizens within the framework of the “rule of law”. Representative democracy means that decisions affecting a society are made not by all its members, but by a group of representatives who are elected by the people to do it (Held 2006: 62). This type of government and modern political system is applied in governments that are far from each other, such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. According to the above content, today liberal democracy, along with its rival social democracy, is a common political system in a number of countries around the world. Thus, liberal democracy is a hybrid system where the word liberal refers to its philosophical and intellectual school and democracy refers to the role of the people in government. The combination of these two words refers to a system in which one facet or one dimension is liberalism and the other facet or dimension is democracy (Poladi 2007: III/115). Of course, we should keep in mind that each of these two intellectual and political currents has their own tradition and history in the West. While sharing some values, in others, they not only differ from each other, but sometimes, they are placed against each other. Therefore, a kind of contradiction and confrontation is observed in the political system of liberal democracy of the West. Despite the perceived contradiction and opposition between liberalism and democracy, the linkage and combination between them is also necessary. Because, according to Norberto Bobbio, a prominent Italian thinker of the 20th century, liberalism and democracy complete each other, as well, these incompatible twins inevitably are confederate to each other (Bobbio 1997: 111). Liberals believe that combination of these two is an auspicious union that establishes the desired and ideal liberal government by the modern man of our time; a government that responds to the needs and demands of contemporary modern man.

So, generally we can say that liberal democracy is a common and ruling political system in usually industrialized and developed Western countries. The cultural and ideological West¹ often enjoys this type of democracy, as well. Some Western thinkers, especially John Locke, played an important role in generating the liberal democracy system. For example, Bryan Magee, a philosopher at Oxford University, says: “Locke served more than any other thinker to set foundations for theory of liberal democracy” (Magee 2006). David Held believes: “It was in Mill’s works that the theory of liberal democracy was best studied and codified. In this thinking, the rulers should

¹ Cultural and ideological west opposite to geographical west, and naturally, its scope and territory is vaster than the geographical west, so it includes countries like Japan, Australia, South Korea and Singapore.

be accountable to the ruled through political mechanisms. These mechanisms, including holding regular elections, competition among potential representatives, and debate among free opinions, should provide citizens with a satisfactory means to choose, approve, and control political decisions” (Held 2006: 102). Therefore, liberal democracy, as a modern political system, is one of the important indicators and values of liberalism in the field of politics and political system. Today, liberal worldview defends political system of liberal democracy, and liberal democracy is the ideal model proposed by liberal societies for governing and politics. Today, governments called “Liberal-Democrat” or “Democrat-Liberal” are examples of mutual dependence of liberalism and democracy. The relation between them is very complicated and can never be an identity or tautological relation. Each one alone has its own meaning, but when combined together, they get another meaning. Every liberal government is not necessarily democratic, as every democratic government is not necessarily a liberal government (Bobbio 1997: 15).

Thus, one of the important differences between modern liberalism and primitive democracy is the matter of public voting right. The right to vote was an axiom and recognized matter in classical democracy, while it was not a compulsory matter in liberalism, especially at the beginning of liberal state formation. Liberal writers considered the right to vote undesirable and premature, because at that time only rich people had the right to vote. This problem was also solved in modern democracy. Step by step, changing classical democracy to modern democracy, which is combined with liberalism, the right to vote was also solved; because the right to vote has no systematic contradiction with right oriented government (liberal government) or government established on minimum advocates. Gradually, a mutual relationship between liberalism and democracy transpired in such a way that the fusion and ties of liberalism and democracy has become undeniable today. Therefore, the connection and cohesion between liberalism and democracy is such that a non-democratic liberal government and a non-liberal democratic government are improbable today. Bobbio concludes two points from this analysis: first, in order to protect the fundamental rights of individuals on which the liberal government is based, it is necessary to employ democratic methods. And second, the implementation of democratic methods also requires protection of individual fundamental rights. Thus, gradually the ideals and values of democracy and liberalism have been integrated and intertwined. For example, only democratic governments have emerged from liberal revolutions, and human rights are more respected in these types of governments. The binding between two concepts of liberal and democracy is so clear that today, any authoritarian government is considered both anti-liberal and anti-democratic (Bobbio, 1997: 52–53).

Transition and Historical Background of Democracy

According to the reports of democracy historians, the history of democracy reaches back to around 2500 years before Christ. The primitive democracy was direct democracy. But gradually, direct democracy turned into representative democracy, and different types of democracy emerged for establishing government and state as today, some researchers have mentioned more than ten models of democracy in their works and writings (see: Held 1990; Lipset 2006). Thus, democracy, while having history of twenty-five centuries, is considered one of the most acceptable and attractive models of the political system in the contemporary world. While being widely accepted, of course it also has serious critics, too. As mentioned, the main reason for this admissibility and attractiveness is its opposition and conflict with tyranny and dictatorship. Since tyranny and dictatorship are hated and rejected, different sectors of people have admitted and are attracted to democracy as a competitive and democratic system. Anyway, in political tradition of the West, we see the first application of democracy as direct participation of people in social affairs administration in ancient Greek city-states. In ancient Greek democracies, all citizens had the right to participate in the legislative assembly and vote. They could also hold all kinds of executive and judicial positions, some of which were awarded to various citizens through elections and others through lottery system. This type of direct democracy, i.e. the direct rule of the people over the people, was possible only in a small political and geographical area where social, economic and political relations were at their simplest level. The democracy of the ancient era could not provide an electoral system or representation method that could establish a democratic system in a large and vast country. Consequently, this form of government did not go beyond the limits of small city-states during its short life (Mill 1990: 2–3). After the renaissance and emergence of modernity and great philosophers and thinkers such as Locke, Descartes, Hobbes, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Kant, new democracies, i.e. indirect and representative democracy (liberal democracy), emerged and became popular. Representative or liberal democracy, which was founded on the basis of market economy (capitalism) and modern western civilization, has also different basic elements of ontology, epistemology, methodology, value cognition. Its characteristics and constituent elements are liberalism, rationalism, humanism, secularism, empiricism, materialism, capitalism, freedom, equality and tolerance. Today, the above features are considered as basic and acclaimed values of liberal democracy.

Typology of Democracy

The typology of democracy is another important and basic topic of democracy. Discussing typology of democracy is necessary because we do not have “pure democracy” in the contemporary world. In other words, we are not facing a pure democracy, but we face democracies that have Christian, Islamic, liberal, socialist orientation and so on. Usually, democracy is annexed to something (a school or ideology) and its annexation indicates its diversity and multiplicity. The important point is that this diversity and plurality cannot be a justification for discrimination and injustice among citizens, because discrimination and injustice are in conflict with the essence of democracy and the violation of human rights, which is inalienable. Therefore, although democracy has different classes and types, they all emphasize one thing, namely “priority of people”, which is the essence of democracy.

Another point is that the topic of types of democracy needs long enough detail and is somewhat ambiguous; some thinkers have stated many types and models while some others have fewer. David Held, the famous commentator of democracy, described approximately eight models, four classic models and four contemporary ones, and explained each one of them. I refrain from entering into detail because I am about to discuss in brief.

Some researchers pointing to only two types of democracy, i.e. direct and representative (parliamentary) democracy, say that “parties play a vital role in representative democracy, because they organize the will of people and act as a means of communication between the rulers and the ruled; therefore, they believe that representative democracy and political parties are twins” (Alam 2004: 300). Macpherson, a Canadian neo-Marxist thinker and a researcher of democracy studies, pointed to three different types of democracy:

1. Non-liberal democracy (its communist type);
2. Non-liberal democracy (its underdeveloped type);
3. Liberal democracy, or liberal democracy, as a system of power.

Macpherson considers the first model democracy belonging to communist countries (former Soviet Union and some Eastern European countries), which is a serious rival to Western liberal democracy, and both have been quarrelling and struggling with each other for years¹. Underdeveloped democracy (the sec-

¹ As observable, Macpherson stated it when communist democracy was at its peak of its power and had the ability to compete with liberal democracy. But today, the Eastern Bloc has disintegrated and communist countries have become independent. It seems that communist democracy cannot compete with liberal democracy and liberal democracy somehow has gained influence and control in communist countries.

ond model), from his point of view, has had enough impact on both Eastern and Western world. Of course, Macpherson believes that these three types of democracy are not independent from each other. He added in this context: “The problem is that these three types of democracy could not and will not be able to survive independently. Out of the three, two technologically advanced parts of our world are in completion. The third world also has a great influence on two other ‘East and West’ worlds” (Macpherson 2012: 40–41). So, according to Macpherson, democracy is not synonymous with liberal democracy. However, it also includes its other two types, that is, communist and underdeveloped governments, which are related to the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Acknowledging this point, Macpherson says: “One of the facts that must be considered and is often easily overlooked is that democracy is not completely equal to our particular system, i.e. liberal democracy. Rather, the obviously non-liberal systems of the Soviet countries (meaning countries with a socialist system) and also the relatively different systems of the most developing countries in Asia and Africa claim having democratic system based on their history; and they have more historical authenticity than Western liberal democracy (Macpherson 2012: 41). Macpherson believes, to call a system democratic, it is necessary to emphasize goals not means to achieve those goals. The criterion of democracy is to achieve the goals through the participation of the masses in the destiny of their country and placing such an ideal goal above all other individual goals. And this, of course, is the classic concept of democracy prior to emergence of liberalism. Therefore, we conclude that newly independent developing countries generally have the right to be called democratic not liberal democratic. These nations deny most of the central and determining components of liberal democracy and insist on their attitude. Thus, the only commonality between the two forms of democracy is in its ultimate goal, i.e. freedom, human dignity and moral value for the individual members of the society (ibid.: 79–80). So, we can conclude from Macpherson’s argues that democracy is not equal to liberal democracy. He states that the Eastern world, especially the developing countries, have not yet accepted the core components of liberal democracy and have their own democracy. From all Macpherson’s arguments in the book *Three Faces of Democracy*, which he discussed fairly well and precisely, we can conclude that he thought of democracy as a method, not as a goal, and he considered it a mechanism to reach the goal; therefore, he discussed at least three models of democracy. In other words, he respected all democracies and accepted them all, not just liberal democracy.

There is another division that seems to be better and more comprehensive than all previous divisions of democracy. This division is such that we divide democracy from different aspects according to different criteria and it can be presented in three types/models:

- A. Considering participation and will of people's role, it is divided into two types: direct and indirect (representative); the direct method is mainly associated with the ancient Greek city-states; of course, in our time, methods such as referendums and referring to public votes are considered direct participation methods. But, contemporary and recent century democracies are usually indirect (representative) ones.
- B. The second aspect is the division of democracy based on its historical course; from this point of view, democracy is divided into two classic and new types.
- C. The third division is made according to the objectives of democracy, i.e. the goal that the idea and the execution of democracy seeks to reach, as sometimes the objective of democracy is provision of individual freedom and sometimes provision of civil virtue; sometimes, it emphasizes only political equality and sometimes economic equality as the basis of political equality. This third kind, objective based division, has several models as follows: (1) Liberal Democracy; (2) Participatory Democracy; (3) Socialist Democracy; (4) Elitist Democracy; (5) Pluralist Democracy. According to the transformation made in the meaning of democracy through decades, the types of democracy are not limited to the above only, but other models can be added, too. Changing in the meaning of democracy helps us to discover new models, and make reforms in interpreting and analyzing democracy in order to associate and modify it to different cultures, schools and ideologies.

2. Reviewing the Principles, Conditions and Values of Democracy

Scientific and Fair Criticism

Analysing and interpreting of the concepts of “democracy” and “liberal democracy” guide us to the conclusion that in analysis, evaluation and review of the two concepts, we should be careful not to be trapped in superficiality, favoring particular political thought and judging with haste, unfairness and superficiality. We should be especially more careful and reflect on “liberal democracy”, which is combined of two concepts – “democracy” and “liberal”, because some of the criticisms of liberal democracy actually are not a criticism, but in fact, want to abolish “democracy” and prevent expansion of “democratic thought” among nations. Such critics willingly or unwillingly, defend the idea of tyranny and autocracy, and work in favour of totalitarianism. In some societies, including Iran and Afghanistan, democracy, liberal-

ism and liberal democracy suffer from politicization and misunderstanding, although in various degrees. In such societies, it is not only real personalities who suffer desecration and are assassinated in character, but some concepts and ideologies suffer the same fate. Even the elites of this region amazingly judge extremely. The words democracy, liberal and liberal democracy in such societies are sometimes used as insults to its supporters; and vice versa, sometimes they are deliberated so sacred and beautiful that no one dares to criticize and evaluate them. Insulting and cursing followers of democracy indicates a lack of information and proper understanding of the ideology, and arises from the prejudice and dogma. Dedicating democracy, liberalism and liberal democracy to denying all criticism stems from the devotion to west, self-despise, taking passive approach to human ideas and attainments. Obviously, both views are considered incorrect and suggestive as they suffer from two extreme approaches in the field of thoughts and theorization, which should be avoided. Some power holders and individuals treat mis-performance of some liberal democracies and critics to it as a suitable tactic for political falsification of democracy and liberal democracy theories. Accordingly, some devotees of totalitarianism and tyranny converse about the failure and termination of democracy in order to defend their idea of authoritarianism, autocracy and totalitarianism. It seems that all these approaches and positions are not in the right and moderate way of theorization and thinking. Modern democracy and modernist ideas based on it should be carefully analyzed and scientifically evaluated. As any other thought and human construct, these concepts need serious criticism and evaluation, but not through defamation and curse of the concepts. Criticisms should be presented clearly and far from any political falsification and the two historical and theoretical aspects of the question should not be mixed. An important point is that the concepts of democracy, liberalism and liberal democracy originated from the West; observing the literature, we can see that the most serious and scientific criticisms have been made in the West and by Western philosophers and thinkers, like Popper and Berlin. Above all, it is the “collectivists” who have aroused the most fundamental and serious criticisms to liberalism and liberal democracy (Mahmoudi 2013: 164–165).

Obviously, criticisms made on democracy and other related concepts by Western and liberal thinkers do not mean that Muslim writers and researchers do not need to consider their scientific and methodical criticism. Therefore, Muslim intellectuals and thinkers should scientifically and methodically criticize and evaluate democracy, liberal democracy and other concepts and paradigms based on modern ideas. Therefore, democracy and liberal democracy are not two separate categories and unrelated concepts. Seyed Ali Mahmoudi, an Iranian researcher, has made a good comparison between the two principles

of democracy and liberal democracy, and he has formulated the common lines and differences well. Now, by enumerating both principles of democracy and liberal democracy, I will discuss their commonalities and differences.

Principles of Democracy

Mahmoudi in his book *Brightness of Democracy* has summarized the principles of democracy in five types:

1. Social and political freedoms, such as freedom of speech, pen, publications, establishment of parties and civil institutions and holding meetings and demonstrations;
2. Equality of all people as citizens to the law;
3. Freedom of election based on the law;
4. Establishment of government based on the votes of the people;
5. Separation of the three sources of power, the legislature, executive and judiciary.

According to Mahmoudi, there is no disagreement between the principles of democracy and liberal democracy regarding the above five principles, with the explanation that the type of attitude to each of these concepts is not necessarily the same.

Principles of Liberal Democracy

Principles of liberal democracy are summarized as follows:

1. Liberal democracy emphasizes on respect of private property and freedom of production and trade in the light of free competition among citizens. The priority of freedom to justice means that achieving social justice is achieved through freedom.
2. Freedom of expression, pen and publications. Citizens' civil liberties are fulfilled by establishing parties and civil institutions to exchange ideas and monitor continuously the government's policies and performances, along with questioning and criticizing in case of deviation or mistake.
3. Independence of religion, knowledge, art and literature from government's intervention, citizens' enjoyment of a private sphere without government interference, practice of social, political and religious tolerance in public arena along with affording public security by the government.

4. Establishing minimum government as a guardian of law enforcement, providing security and basic needs for society based on the constitution along with the separation of three powers.
5. Emphasis on ensuring the rights of schools of thoughts, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in the light of expanding and promoting human rights.
6. Giving priority to the principles and law than to the good or expediency; i.e. citizens should be free to choose good moral concepts and their ideal patterns in their private life or public spheres, but they should regulate their relations with their fellow citizens based on mutual rights and on the basis of established laws.
7. No government intervention in determining and applying the moral concepts as good in citizens lives. Supervising citizens' freedoms and, if necessary, preventing the violation of their rights towards each other.
8. Having the right to resist against the autocratic government and state or the government that has become autocratic by violating the officially accepted boundaries of laws and regulations. The right to resist is applied in both positive and negative ways, as revolution and various methods of civil disobedience (Mahmoudi 2013: 180–182).

Thus, by looking carefully at the principles of liberal democracy, we can see that democracy does not really need to adhere to some of these principles. It is possible to accept democracy, without: first, privatization and free market is very fat and wide; second, accept minimal government and small size; third, set special emphasis on the rights of minorities; fourthly, let the citizens determine their moral good models themselves and finally, regarding the selection and application of concepts as good by citizens (choosing moral values, any school of thought, adopting a religion, spending their leisure time, type of movies, books, music...), the government should be neutral (should not impose any special thought, religion, taste... on citizens) (*ibid.*). But in liberal democracy we confront specific and more advanced set of principles. Because liberal democracy, in addition to the principles observed in democracy, has brought new principles, which originate from fountains of philosophical, legal, moral and economic liberalism. Favouring individual freedom, individual property, priority of freedom over justice, separation of private and public spheres, minimal government, priority of right over good/beneficent, neutrality of government against the choice of concepts as good by citizens, the right to civil resistance against the autocratic government or any government that practices autocracy are all the principles and values that liberal democracy gives importance to, so that, in this age, politics could find a meaning and a form suitable for the needs and goals of today's people. In fact, liberal democ-

racy is a response to compensate the deficiency of democracy in the framework of validity of the majority's vote, under the title of majority's autocracy. In democracy, there is an inconsistency between the majority's votes, on the one hand, and protection of rights of individuals, especially minorities, on the other hand, because handing over too much power to the majority can lead to the neglect or loss of minority's rights. In contrast, liberal democracy seeks to balance the powerful role of the majority with the demands, views and rights of minorities (ibid.: 183). Therefore, liberal democratic government emphasizes the rights of minorities, and this feature distinguishes liberal democracy from simple and classical democracy. According to John Gray, one of the theorists of liberalism, "the essential condition of the liberal government in all its forms is that the power and authority of the government should be limited by a system of basic rules and functions in which individual freedom and equality of persons are respected under the rule of law" (Gray 2002: 120).

Values and Positive Characteristics of Democracy

Despite some disadvantages and shortcomings of democracy mentioned in the works and speeches of some thinkers and writers, many positive values and characteristics have been remarked for it. Robert Dahl, one of the theorists of democracy, tries to show that despite many shortcomings and important ambiguities that can be seen in the concept of democracy and democratic practices, we can still vote for the superiority of democracy over other forms of political order. Dahl listed many values and benefits for the political system of democracy, which are mentioned below:

1. Democracy helps us to stop the rule of evil and cruel autocrats.
2. Democracy guarantees a number of basic rights for its citizens; rights that non-democratic systems do not want, or cannot recognize them.
3. Democracy guarantees individual freedoms to its citizens more than any other practically possible system.
4. Democracy helps people to protect their basic interests themselves.
5. Only a democratic government can provide the maximum opportunity for people to freely determine their own destiny and live according to the rules they elect.
6. Only democratic government can provide the maximum opportunity to exercise moral responsibility.
7. Democracy promotes the development of human traits more than any possible alternatives.
8. Only a democratic government can guarantee a desirable level of political equality.

9. New democracies are formed on the basis of representations who do not fight against each other.
10. Countries having democratic governments have been more prosperous than countries having non-democratic governments.

With all these advantages, democracy is a less risky choice for most of us than other available alternatives (Dahl 2010: 77–78). In addition to the above, Dahl stated other advantages of democracy, in another work of his, in a comparison he makes between democracy and any other alternative system, such as:

1. Avoiding autocracy;
2. Basic rights;
3. Public freedom;
4. Determining own destiny;
5. Moral autonomy;
6. Human evolution;
7. Protecting primary private personal interests;
8. Political equity;
9. Peace seeking;
10. Prosperity;
11. Freedom of speech (ibid.: 58).

Therefore, as mentioned before, freedom of speech is an important condition for the real participation of citizens in political and social life. Therefore, one of the important values and fundamental principles of democracy is the citizens' freedom of speech. Without freedom of speech, a citizen cannot express his/her wishes to be elected or elect a representative. Therefore, bringing people's voices to the government and rulers is one of the manifestations of freedom of speech. Of course, it should be noted that "freedom of speech does not only mean that someone has the right to be heard; rather, he/she has the right to hear others' words as well" (ibid.: 119). This phrase clearly implies that listening to the voice of people is one of essentials of a democratic system.

Necessary Conditions for Realization of Democracy

Democracy, like many other facts, requires a set of conditions. According to Robert Dahl, who was one of the leading thinkers of liberal democracy, the following three important conditions are necessary for the realization of democracy:

1. Control of military and police forces by elected officials;
2. Existence of beliefs and democratic political culture;
3. Absence of any anti-democratic external control.

Also, he considered two other conditions as favourable conditions of democracy:

1. Existence of a modern economy based on free market and modern society (capitalism);
2. Absence of dispersion among subcultures (ibid.: 184).

As Dahl said, his three important conditions for the realization of democracy are not limited to liberal democracy. Therefore, any type of democracy, including Islamic democracy, must have these three conditions to be realized as democratic. If the three conditions are not fulfilled as the principle of democracy, the existence of democracy is under question. Thus, the elected officials must stop any kind of military or force influence; otherwise, the person elected by the people will not obtain power. As the culture of political participation and democracy is necessary for a society, if the people do not believe in political destiny and the rule of competent and righteous rulers and do not give enough importance to it, the society will move towards dictatorship and tyranny and naturally detach them from democracy. Also, anti-democratic interference of foreign agents and neighbours and foreign countries, especially the interference of great powers, causes serious damage to democratic process. But Dahl's two favourable conditions for democracy are mostly taken from the elements of liberal democracy. Especially, the condition of modern economy based on free market, which is capitalism, is one of the main infrastructures of liberal democracy. As we will point out in the next chapter, liberal democracy has a close and unbreakable correlation and connection with market economy; it seems that the development of liberal democracy is not possible except on the basis of capitalism and market economy. As a modern society, against traditional and underdeveloped society, is also one of the necessary platforms for the realization of liberal democracy.

Democracy as an Unfinished Project

Democracy stems from change and social transformation. The idea of transformation and change, which is attributed to the Greek Heraclitus and is one of the necessary prerequisites of democracy, plays an effective role in its development and growth. Based on the idea of change, we call democracy an unfinished project; because as long as there is change and transformation,

democracy is also changing, evolving and will progress through its evolutionary process, as democracy is a fluid and dynamic concept having enough flexibility. Karl Popper introduces Plato, Hegel, and Marx as the three main founders of a closed and authoritarian society, because in their ideal society, instead of change, transformation and dynamism, stability and stillness prevails. According to Popper, Plato defends from authoritarian system, because he opposes the open society in which criticism, equality, free thinking and rationality rule. So, based on the idea of change and social transformation, we can talk about the revival, evolution and typology of democracy.

Thus, it is true that democracy in the contemporary world has defeated its great rivals and it seems to be the only victorious and universal alternative that has expanded tremendously, but this superiority does not mean to declare the completion of the project of democracy and consider it terminated. Therefore, democracy is always an unfinished project that needs re-reading, rethinking, revision, completion and deepening it in all circumstances. Therefore, the popularity of democracy in contemporary world is not a perfect form of it, and the ruling democracies (democracies we observe) may be better, compared to competing political systems (authoritarianism and totalitarianism); it is not necessarily ideal democracy. According to this point, “if we put an end for democracy, we have grabbed its abilities and capacities to renewal and deepening” (Ansari 2005: 2). Therefore, according to Habermas, just as modernity “is an unfinished project”, democracy is also an unfinished project too. And, if we had a democratic system in the past and we have it now, we can have a more democratic system with effort.

Based on this analysis, democracy, in general, and liberal democracy, in particular, needs to be revised today in any environment and context it is applied. Therefore, rethinking and exploring its principles and components can contribute to its renewal, dynamism and evolution while deepening and consolidating its foundations and constituent elements. In addition, the belief in the incompleteness of the democracy project means that for each society and culture, a democracy should be presented that should be appropriate for that society. Nevertheless, if we consider democracy as a finished or completed project or according to Fukuyama’s words “the end of history”, we will be deprived of its modification, reconstruction, and rethinking, deepening and up-to-date analysis.

Islam and Democracy: the Theory of Islamic Democracy

The final argument of this article is the compatibility or incompatibility of democracy with Islam as a divine religion with monotheistic worldview. Are the principles and values of democracy compatible or incompatible with the principles and values of Islam?

Here, I am not going to analyze the complete compatibility of Islam and democracy (with its different kinds and definitions) in detail; nor claim that these two concepts are compatible or incompatible. I will postpone this challenging discussion to another opportunity. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that some of the principles of democracy are not compatible with the principles and foundations of Islamic political thought. On the other hand, in some other principles, there are many commonalities between Islam and democracy. Therefore, in analyzing and evaluating this wide-ranging debate, we should avoid haste and carefully study and scrutinize all aspects and angles of the question.

Therefore, what I can say briefly is that in some principles and presuppositions, democracy is definitely incompatible with Islam, and this incompatibility is regular, as in other religions and ideologies, even liberalism as a breeding ground for democracy, also has this type of incompatibility¹. Thus, if there is confliction between Islam and some principles of democracy, it is because of general character of Islam as a religion; and any other religion inevitably will fall in such a conduct, and this is just because it is a religion, that is, a system of beliefs based on minimum of unchangeable principles making no question. On the other hand, one of the essentials of democracy – no matter how it is defined – is its constant controversy, which inevitably sometimes leads to conflict with some of religion's sacred principles (Enayat 2012: 223).

Therefore, in analyzing and evaluating the matter, we should take into consideration both the fixed and unchangeable principles of religion regarding modern democracy that may be incompatible with the fixed principles, as well as the principles of democracy which are fluid and flexible and maybe compatible with different ideologies, paradigms and worldviews. Accompany and harmony of democracy with liberalism, socialism, Christianity, Islam and other ideologies is proof of this affinity and compatibility. Incompatibility between principles of democracy and Islam may originate from conceptual ambiguity or multiplicity of meaning for democracy and lack of agreement on one of them. There is no consensus on one meaning of democracy, so that we could say whether it is compatible or incompatible with Islam regarding the agreed meaning. Because, as mentioned, there are many definitions or meanings for democracy: rule of people, rule of law, non-dictatorial system, political system with parliament and separation of government powers and transfer of power without violence and bloodshed are only some of the definitions or meanings of democracy. Hence, if democracy means a government

¹ For more detail on challenges and incompatibilities of democracy with liberalism, see: Taheri, Mohammed Hanif, *Epistemological-Social Criticism of Liberal Democracy and its Theoretical-Practical Challenges in the Field of Political-Social Power in Afghanistan* (Author's Ph.D. Dissertation).

system that is opposed to dictatorship, Islam can certainly be compatible with democracy; because there is no place for individual or group autocratic rule in Islam with no doubt. Because in Islamic government, decisions are made, rules are acted upon not on one's personal whims, but according to Sharia – which is a set of rules and regulations taken from Quran and the Prophet's Tradition (ibid.: 226–227).

If governing according to democracy means rule of law, to some extent, it is possible to establish compatibility between Islam and democracy. In this assumption, both Islamic and democratic political systems are generally legalistic. Of course, this compatibility and harmony limits on the title of “legalism”; most possibly, Islamic perception and interpretation of law is not the same as democracy's perception, i.e. the perceptions of both ideologies may be different. For example, the law in Islam usually originates from the Holy Sharia and is based on divine revelation; this law differs from the human law, which may be approved by the parliamentarians in a customary or contractual manner without regarding the Sharia. Anyway, since Islam is basically democratic in nature, it is a political system that does not reflect dictatorship, authoritarianism and tyranny as democracy. Thus, it is possible to talk about the compatibility of Islam and democracy and attain the paradigm and doctrine of Islamic democracy and theorize it. Therefore, as there are theoretical similarities between Islam and democracy, we should not ignore efforts of those who are trying to present Islamic democracy model or highlight the democratic nature of Islam; analysts and proponents of the theory should not be accused of Westernization. We said that democracy has the capacity to accept different ideologies and schools due to its multiple meanings and interpretations. So, it is possible to connect democracy with Islam as an ideology that has special view of God, man and the natural world, which gives us the model of “Islamic democracy”. It is interesting that we see this capacity in both ideologies: democracy has the potential to align itself with many principles and indicators of Islam; and Islam has the capacity to digest the main principles and values of democracy with rational policy of selection and comparatively make them Islamic – those noble and positive values of democracy that are the result of successful human experiences and human rationality throughout history.

Apart from the above reasonable method based on interaction, there are two other methods, i.e. the method of absolute negation or rejection and, complete and unquestioning acceptance of western democracy; the first is dogmatic and petrification of radical fundamentalists perception, such as the Taliban, ISIS, and Al-Qaeda; and the second is the fans of Westernization who emphasize complete acceptance of Western democracy and other values of the modern world. Accepting this idea means putting away human wisdom/rationality and blindly imitating foreign and western ideology with no question. Surly,

what some Muslim intellectuals usually did and do, i.e. modernizing all Islamic teachings and trying to make secularist scientific concepts from religious texts, it is beside being a kind of original Islamic teachings distortion and a heresy in religion, also considered passivity to modern western culture; vice versa, trying to change democratic and western values to Islamic ones, require sufficient expertise in both ideas. Hence, the logical and reasonable option is to choose the values and rational principles that are common between democracy and Islam, the same positive values of democracy that were discussed and do not conflict with the principles of Islamic thought.

Summary and Conclusion

In conclusion, briefly two points are mentioned:

1. For understanding democracy and liberal democracy as a modern and advanced political system, it is necessary to know about its basic concepts (fundamentals and principles) and its constituent elements; concepts such as freedom, equality, elections, separation of powers, rights of citizens, democracy and liberalism. Therefore, a detailed understanding of fundamental concepts of democracy and values associated with them is a must to learn about democracy and liberal democracy.

2. Despite its problems and shortcomings, democracy is the most acceptable form of government compared to other political system models (monarchy, autocracy, emirate, etc.). Thus, trying to reform, rebuild and expand its values, especially in traditional societies like Afghanistan, seems to be a real necessity. Therefore, the intellectuals should try to build democracy that fits the native and Islamic culture in which religious norms are not damaged.

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