

JEFFERSON AND TOCQUEVILLE ON DEMOCRACY AS HEMISPERIC VIEWS

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Abstract

This paper examines democracy to Jefferson's and Tocqueville's philosophy in shaping the American polity. A few scholars have discussed the connection between Jefferson and Tocqueville, but this writing provides a value of democracy as hemispheric mind or trans-national sources. Democracy is not only an American intellectual mind, but also a global mind. The philosophers, sociologists, and economists of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century formulated a political program that served as a guide to social policy first in the United States, then on the European continent, and finally in the other parts of the inhabited world as well. It was reflected in Tocqueville's journey for learning democracy in America around the mid of the nineteenth century. Therefore, there are two significant points to describe both Tocqueville and Jefferson; they are democracy and tradition with all conditions.

Keywords: Jefferson, Tocqueville, democracy, founding, and liberal

INTRODUCTION

Most people are familiar with the name of Alexis de Tocqueville, even some of them adore Alexis de Tocqueville these days. His extraordinary account of the political landscape of the early United States, *Democracy in America*, is endlessly quoted by pundits and politicians of every bar. Today if one reads about America, about democracy, about liberty, about bureaucracy, about equality, about almost any aspect of politics, or for that matter about large stretches of human nature as it emerges in a political context, one sooner or later encounters Tocqueville. In the work of *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville utilizes facts, observations, and speculations to examine both democracy in general and American

democracy in particular. Democracy was the lens through Tocqueville saw the political world.

For him, the brave and frightening new world ushered in by the era of revolutions was an era of democracy. As he wrote in the introduction to *Democracy in America*, "a great democratic revolution is taking place in our midst" (Tocqueville, ed. Richard D. Heffner, 1956, p.26).

Furthermore, Alexis de Tocqueville has become a fixture in contemporary American political discourse as reflected in *Democracy in America*. This work also contains Tocqueville's associational life in America. The tendency for democratic societies to centralize power was an important aspect of

“Tocqueville’s thought on the role of associations” (Boesche, 1980, p.550-563; Gannett, 2003, p.1-16; Koritansky, 1975, p.63-81). Associations served as an artificial aristocracy in democratic societies and helped to counter democratic tendencies toward centralization (Dolence, 2006, p.3-4).

Most scholars have created a certain Tocqueville, one who slips easily into the main dialogue of American politics between self-designated liberals and conservatives, with each camp claiming him as its own. To the one he is a “liberal conservative” who values freedom as well as property rights; the other he is a “conservative liberal” who is alert to the dangers of “too much democracy” and who commiserates with the burdens borne by political elites, not the least of which is the periodic invasion of the political realm by the masses (Wolin, 2001, p.3).

Tocqueville represented an important early engagement between liberalism and democracy. The eighteen-century revolutions in America and France had been widely represented as the triumph of liberalism over monarchy and aristocracy. Tocqueville’s self-description as a new kind of liberal reflected his strong conviction that freedom or liberty was the fundamental political value and an even stronger fear that the greatest threat to freedom was from a combination of political democracy and social equality. Nineteenth and twenty-century have responded warmly to Tocqueville’s criticism of egalitarian democracy, in both its political and social

forms, and to his warnings about “the tyranny of the majority” (Ibid, p.9-10).

In the modern society at that time, it preferred to a democratic country. This sense, democracy, then, is to be understood as a conveyor of accumulated experience. For Tocqueville, “democracy is the product of the new political system derived from the process of the changing of modern society” (Stone & Menzel, 2005, p.xvi). It began the immigrants called ‘the Puritans’ with their religious orthodox in the New World. Tocqueville remarks that “All the Europeans who successively established themselves in the New World. All these European colonies contained the elements, if not the development, of a complete democracy” (Tocqueville, ed. Richard D. Heffner, 1956, p.40-41). They forced American society to adopt the Puritan beliefs including hard work, competition, discipline, and individualism.

Meanwhile, Thomas Jefferson as one of leading American founding is chosen because of his uniqueness. Jefferson had showed his great accomplishments among other American founding fathers such as George Washington and John Adams. He looks monumental and unique.

Although his speech is lower than others, he has great power in writing. His pen is like a sharp sword that is ready to cut down any problem shortly. Jefferson’s ideas are mostly embodied in scattered writings, particularly in his superb letters. Through his letters,

Jefferson spoke on the nation and by means of letters he stimulated his followers. One of the great aspects of Jefferson thought is that it is relevant with era. It is not only the age when he gave his ideas but also the age which passed through that era. However, Jefferson was more relevant with the crises or great stories happened in America.

Thomas Jefferson is also a mystery. He is a man who promoted democracy and majority rule yet who also proudly claimed to be a member of the natural aristocracy. He favored legislative rather than executive supremacy yet he was the first American president to advance a complex political agenda. He disfavored constitutions yet generally supported the American Constitution. He did not support the Constitution clearly. He was particularly critical of the presidency, writing to John Adams that “their President seems a bad edition of a Polish king” (Peterson 1984, p.910). He was also concerned over the lack of a Bill of Rights, and fretted that the new government might be an overreaction to Shay Rebellion.

Jefferson was careful in making the political changes in order not to make social and political upheavals. He learned from the French Revolution and the American Revolution that those revolutions were absolutely different. According to Burke’s discourses, the American Revolution referred to freedom, democracy, non-violence, and legitimacy, meanwhile the French Revolution was as antipode – despotic, undemo-cratic,

violent, and illegitimate. Jefferson also learned about the overreaction of the Shay’s Rebellion. Therefore, the values of classic liberal were always embedded in the Jefferson’s thought such as limited government, laissez-faire, and freedom. As Louis Hartz (Hartz, 1995, p.3) suggests in *The Liberal Tradition in America* that “America has inherited a liberal tradition primarily through the teachings of John Locke, and that these ideas were in turn transmitted by Thomas Jefferson”.

In order to assess the quality of American democracy, it is useful to trick out democracy from the tapestry of the tradition. Jefferson appreciated the importance of custom and tradition, and he did not seek to radically reinvent American society. Moreover, the framer of the American Constitution looked at populist democracy. And though Jefferson undertook a fairly radical experiment in framing a new government in the new world, he was conservative skeptics who did not believe in the perfectibility of mankind.

Both Tocqueville and Jefferson are passionate democrats who look to free society from the dead handoff the past, and who are guided by a quasi-utopian outlook. Tocqueville said that “The second circumstance to which I have alluded is, that the social condition and the constitution of the Americans are democratic” (Tocqueville, ed. Richard D. Heffner, 1956, p.144). He described himself between aristocracy greatness and democratic justice. According to Tocqueville, “In aristocratic

ages, vast ideas are commonly entertained of the dignity, the power, and the greatness of man” (Ibid, p.166). Tocqueville sees as well as Jefferson that the aristocrats’ claim that their nobles help them to understand between twofold world between aristocracy and modern society.

Therefore, this paper engages with the American founding from a critical historiography perspective. Mainly, it connects with the ways in which the American founding has been studied in order to understand not what the American founding is, but instead what it might have meant at different points in meanings. Such an analysis entails foremost changing the terms with which Americans conceptualizes the American Founding: from an historical event and a set of facts fixed in the past, towards conceptualizing it as a dynamic and contested idea that is constructed in different ways to serve different political and social needs. As a result, the concept of trans-national in studying the founding ideas is also inevitably true, mainly American founding.

AMERICAN INTELLECTUAL MIND IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Since this paper is a product of American Studies’ discipline, it will follow the characteristics of American Studies which has the main stream as interdisciplinary studies (Smith, 1980, p.14, McDowell, 1948, p.iv, Lohof, 1978, p.3). The interdisciplinary

approach is used to analyze American experiences from multidisciplinary perspectives, namely historical, political, economical, sociological and cultural disciplines. It describes the concept of American democracy from founding like Thomas Jefferson to the Industrial Revolution. Democracy is as one of the important American intellectual minds that is still held until now. The growth and the development of American democracy as an American mind cannot be parted from phenomenon living in the society at a particular time. Democracy as a living concept has its connection with history, politics, economics, sociology, and culture of the society where it is nurtured. And the best understanding of that issue is through inter-connection among those disciplines.

The best thing we can do is to conceive American Studies as collaboration among men working from within existing academic disciplines but attempting to widen boundaries impasse by conventional methods of inquiry. This implied a sustained effort of the student of literature to take account sociological, historical and anthropological data and methods. (Smith, 1980, p.14)

In this paper, American classic democracy in the United States can be understood accurately by comprehending the founding. A founding is not only as the birth of nation, the moment of creation after which regime is said to exist, but also as a concept, an idea made up of many

other ideas. By comparing American founding and European elite, it builds on a premise that gradually should seem self-evident: the American and European ‘democracy’ experiences have been intrinsically different. European traditional-ists defended aristocracy, social hierarchy, and ecclesiastical establishment, meanwhile the Americans advocates of such concerns as a market economy, an anti-Communist foreign policy, and a global democratic crusade.

Therefore, a concept of founding can be understood well by adopting the reconciliation the past, present, and future. McDowell (McDowell, 1948, p.v) points out that “American Studies are designed to modify a persistent characteristics of mankind and to advance a contemporary movement in education. The characteristic is tendency of men to live predominantly in one of three tenses, past, present, or future.” He assumes that if one applies the interdisciplinary approach, he can bridge past, present, and future. Founding itself cannot be separated from the concept of tenses. Since founding existed in some time in the past, and it still exists in the present time and has been developed into various variations but limited by some characteristics in the future. In short, those tenses are interrelated.

Furthermore, American democracy is a phenomenon in American society. It is not only as an American intellectual mind, but also as hemispheric mind. Therefore, this paper also uses a ‘trans-national’ approach

from John Carlos Rowe. He states that “the multicultural and multi-ethnic US cannot be understood adequately without considering its transnational sources, hemispheric interests, and global relations”

(Rowe, 2010, p.1).

Some ideas from American founding and some changes of America’s cultural eras bring distinctive characters in each historical one. Therefore, by studying the historical background issues like American democracy can reveal the democratic values, traditions, and customs. Teuku Ibrahim Alfian (Alfian, 2003, p.5) stated “one aspect that must be considered in the historical method is time element. The inter-related categories in this method are diversity, change, and continuity”. Therefore historical approach is a suitable one to get acquainted information of American democracy from two prominent figure, Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville.

History itself is a phenomenon. It is a transcript of the relentless surge of events, the sequential and meaningful record of human activity. Therefore, the historical method aims to access the meaning and to read the message of the happenings in which men and events relate meaningfully to each other. Gilbert J. Garraghan as quoted by Teuku Ibrahim Alfian (Alfian, 2003) wrote

Historical method is a systematic body of principles and rules designed to aid effectively in gathering the source—

materials of history, appraising them critically, and presenting a synthesis (generally in written form) of the result achieved.

In studying ideology like classic democracy, a historical perspective can be used as an analysis tool of ideology. As Karl Mannheim argue that “no ideology could be fully understood unless this historical relationship was clear” (Baradat, 1984, p.7). No ideology, in other words, can be understood unless we grasp the ideas of the previous era and investigate the impact of the previous ideology on the current one. Simply, in order to get better understanding about the American democracy, we firstly understand about the ideology of democracy, mainly the roots of American democracy.

Two literary works, both *Democracy in America* and *Notes on Virginia* describes the events and the society when those novels were produced. Some eras both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution are used to know the relationship between America and Europe. In order properly to understand the impact of France’s Revolution on America, one must have some pictures of what America was like when the news of revolution began arriving from Europe. American Revolution also depicted the struggles of American founding in forming American government.

The American Revolution was an ideological revolution, which is to say a revolution most notably about ideas and philosophy of

governing. To colonial leaders, humans beings were inherently susceptible to being corrupted and to suing the instruments of government power, whether legislation, rules, and regulations or criminal sanctions, to advantage themselves and harm others. Government was necessary, they believed, but government could also be used to impose its will over other individuals and groups. The victims of the abusive use of government power were individual liberty and freedom. Anxiety was clearly present in much of what was said regarding the new Constitution. As the 1780’s drew to a close many people felt that the Articles of Confederation were simply inadequate to govern the new nation. Beneath the feeling was a sense that the revolution had created a spirit hostile to order and efficient government (Coleman, et al. 2012, p.65-66).

In short, there was a debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists about the issue that were essentially social. The Federalists saw the passion for liberty they feared mani-festing itself in the form of “new men” coming to power in the states. The Anti-Federalists justified the infusion of new blood with a radical challenge to the fundamental Federalist belief in a hierarchical society and elite rule. They conten-ded that society was a longer a homogeneous unit for which an elite could speak. Society had changed from a organic hierarchy of ranks and degrees eternally linked to each other to a heterogenous mixture of many classes in which only a member of a certain class could speak for the wants and interests of that class.

Gordon Wood concluded that all the Federalists hopes for a strong self-reliant nation and a healthy economy. “In short, all of what the Federalists wanted out of the new central government seemed in the final analysis depended upon the prerequisite maintenance of aristocratic politics”

(Wood, 1969, p.490-91).

The fundamental debate over the Constitution was one of the most bitter in American history but perhaps nearly as bitter was the conflict over religious matters. By the end of the Revolution religious orthodoxy in America was in retreat. Indeed it had been under challenge since the early seventeenth century when the Puritans arrived to create their city of saints in the wilderness, only to find the freedom of the wilderness a stronger force than the pull of salvation. “The revolution gave impetus to this gradual process by bringing the American soldiers into contact with the multitude of visitors from Europe at the time” (Koch, 1973, p.23). The influence of European Enlightenment thinkers made a profound impression on the American people who debated whether religion had been a benefit to man and took for themselves nicknames such as Voltaire and Rousseau (Purcell, 1963, p.19). The religious liberalism grew up in the era.

In the last two decades of the eighteenth century such anxiety over religious matters has a special meaning. In the context of rapid

political change, religious radicalism can create the feeling that all authority is being washed away and leads to a desire to reestablish the old beliefs or in some way institute religious restraints on the social and political transformation of the time. This movement was closed to American conservative who preserve and keep their traditions.

Meanwhile cultural and social approach can be seen from the changes of cultural values living among American society, mainly democracy. The changes have deep impacts toward the changes of behaviors. Therefore culture and society cannot be separated in learning of a phenomena in the American society. According to Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood

Sociology is essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social institutions and of social processes; it seeks to answer the question of how society is possible, how it works, why it persists. But, of course sociology is concerned also with the processes whereby society changes, gradually, or cataclysmically as in revolution, from one type of society to another. (Laurenson & Swinge-wood, 1972, p.11-12)

A culture is shared by a society. Members of the society agree about the meaning of things and about the ‘why.’ They have interpreted life experiences in ways that validate their own culture’s views. Therefore, since they have

little doubt about that validity, they all share the view that their interpretations are correct. They agree about what the important things are that truly merit respects. Most American traditions are strong work ethic, small government, and Christian-Protestant. The birth of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century was a threat for the fate of Christendom and tended to reform society by using reason for spawning materialism, secularism, and totalitarianism of the modern era.

Culture is not something we are born with, but rather it is learned. This is not to say people can talk objectively about their own culture. Much of what is learned about one's own culture is stored in mental categories that are recalled only when they are challenged by something different. We all have to be taught our culture. If culture is learned, then it is also learnable. That means nobody has to remain for a lifetime locked inside only one culture. In the United States, two prominent cultural spectrum in politics— conservative and liberal — greatly give influences each other. Even the French Revolution (1789-1799) with old ideas about tradition and hierarchy of monarchy, aristocracy, and religious authority was abruptly overthrown by new Enlightenment principles of equality, citizenship, and inalienable rights. In response to the changes, traditionalists emphasized other virtues: close family, morality, responsibility, and social order. In government issues, they were against women's movement, isolationism in foreign

policy, and government support for the less advantaged.

Meanwhile, culture consists of three manifestations as follows: cultural ideas, cultural activities, and humans' work. A product of culture begins with the existence of idea in the mind of humans then it is followed by a work to produce it. The final product is acquired after completing the process of the cultural work. American classical democracy is a cultural artifact. This research focuses on describing the cultural behaviors or the process of cultural influences. There are three prominent issues – continuity, selecting and filtering, and preserv-ing—in the process of the changing a culture to other types. It is undeniably true that culture is always dynamics in a society.

Economics in America is familiar with the concept of capitalism. In economical approach, it highlights on capitalism system. Capitalism is an economic system where the means of production are privately held and operated for profit. It is a system of resource allocation where prices are based on the law of supply and demand. It is premised on the idea that self-interested individuals participate in a competitive market where they buy and sell their goods, services, and labor. As Adam Smith put it in his classic work *The Wealth of Nation*,

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard

to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantage. (Smith, 2000, p.14)

It is a system where the vast majority of people learn their living by selling their labor-power for a wage to the owners of the means of production. The driving forces of the system are profit maximization, accumulation of capital, and the incessant need to innovate and expand in order to remain competitive. As Ellen Meiksins writes in capitalism “the production of goods and services is subordinate to the production of capital and capitalist profit. The basic objective of the capitalist system, in other words, is the production and self-expansion of capital” (Wood, 2002, p.2-3).

Another approach is literary approach. A work of literature is any reflection of events or phenomena in a society. Hence the study of literature is very crucial because it exposes to meaningful contexts that are full with descriptive language and characters in line with the spirit of era at the time. As with sociology, literature is pre-eminently concerned with man’s social world, his adaptation to it, and his desire to change it. Thus the novel, as the major literary genre of industrial society, can be seen as a faithful attempt to re-create the social world of man’s relation with his family, with politics, with the State; it delineates too his roles within the family and other institutions, the conflicts and

tensions between groups and social classes (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972, p.13). In short, literature provides a mirror to the age as reflected from two great literary works: Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on Virginia* and Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.

This approach is no different from other kinds of analysis; it attempts to find truth. Literary interpretations always reflect a particular institutional, cultural, and historical background. One of literary approach is ‘Reader-response criticism’ which includes attention of the role of the reader and a process-oriented approach to reading literature. This approach supports activities that encourage us to draw on our personal experiences, opinions, and feelings in our interpretation of literature. According to Davies and Stratton (Davies & Stratton, 1984, p.3) “Reader-Response addresses this problem by making the learners “active participant(s) in the learning proceeds.”

In this case, a reader can give his opinion and interpretation about a phenomenon reflected in the literary work. The interpretation must be proved by giving some facts.

A CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY IN JEFFERSON AND TOCQUEVILLE SEEN

AS TRANS-NATIONAL VIEWS

This study is an attempt to reveal the roots of democracy and the thought of founding in making a discourse of democracy. Thus, it is focused on some ideas of democracy between Jefferson and Tocqueville who gave them the position as two of the figures of democracy. The great ideas do not come automatically, they commonly born from the great thinkers too. Jefferson as an American founding is mostly seen as founding of classic democracy, this democracy tends to classic liberal with its distinctive characteristics. Meanwhile Tocqueville is rather than aristocracy but he is also a bit of liberal with modern democracy as reflected in Jacksonian presidential era in the end of the nineteenth century.

It is not easy to understand the nineteenth-century liberalism. This is particularly true when liberalism is considered from a European rather than an American perspective. Therefore, this study is also intended to define the different types of liberalism by making concrete one of the nebulous shapes of European liberal thought in nineteenth century, it is "aristocratic liberalism"

(Kahan, 1992, p.3).

One of major European thinkers who has correlation with the thought of aristocratic liberalism is Alexis de Tocqueville. Tocqueville is generally conceded to be important thinker, part of the traditional canon of the intellectual history of the West, and thus any re-interpretation of his meaning and significance is important. But the other

European thinkers -Jacob Burckhardt and John Stuart Mill- are used to support the European nature of liberal thought in relation to Tocqueville's ideas. Certainly "they were not all aristocrats by birth, and none of them wished to revive the Old Regime or to base liberty on a traditional aristocracy" (Logue, 1983, p.5).

The aristocratic liberals saw the eighteenth century and the French Revolution as the origins of modernity. For them, the Enlightenment and the Revolution sketched the outlines of the typical social, political, and ideological struggles of the nineteenth century. From these beginnings flowered the commercial spirit and middle-class domination of the nineteenth century, as well as the ominous first stirrings of the great future struggle between the bourgeoisie and the lower classes. The centralized state continued the growth that had begun in the eighteenth century and threatened aristocratic liberal values both because it provided a means for imposing the domination of one class or idea and because it was a threat in itself to the chief values of liberty, individuality, and diversity (Kahan, 1992, p.5).

America had a feudal present and, moreover, its feudal elements provided the basis for commending American democracy to his countrymen. Historically the presence of a strongly entrenched feudalism had been synonymous with a weak central administration, with an "incomplete national government." While this combination may

have been cause for Tocqueville claim that the French could learn from the American example, it was precisely the combination of southern plantation feudalism and an “incomplete” national government that would make secession possible and civil war near interminable. Tocqueville’s feudalism expressed itself in the representation of dispersed power, a loose political system in which the most significant unit—in terms of power, loyalties, and active individual involvement—were local character, hence far smaller than the nation state. (Wolin, 2001, p.232).

The crucial element in Tocqueville’s feudalism was aristocracy. Aristocracy is represented as the instinctive opposition to any form of massed power, monarchical or popular. Although the pride or confidence of self-worth natural to aristocrats prevented them from coalescing their power and honors. Tocqueville, himself a lawyer, found an aristocratic counterpart secreted in America in the values, outlook, and functions of lawyers and judges. “Hidden at the bottom of the soul of legists is something of the tastes and habits of the aristocracy.” They have a natural contempt for the multitude and form a “corps” that is opposed to “the revolutionary spirit.” They prize “order” and “authority”; they have “a liking and respect for what is ancient” and they make a ritual of the following “the legal decisions of their fathers (Ibid, p.233).

Moreover, *Democracy in America* has been recognized as an indispensable starting point for understanding American politics.

... The social condition of the Americans is eminently democratic; this was its character at the foundation of the colonies, and it is still more strongly marked at the present day... (Tocqueville, ed. Richard D. Heffner, 1956, p.49)

It is based, in large part, on Tocqueville’s experiences during his 1831-32 journey through Jacksonian America, but it certainly cannot be reduced to a mere travelogue, or even to a work of mere social science. Nor is it quite a treatise of political philosophy in the tradition of Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. They were classic liberalists.

In order to understand about Jefferson, it is necessary to grasp the issues of Jefferson's age confronted and the kinds of conflicts those issues invited as well as the social causes for which he fought. Therefore, the writer can, with greater confidence, interpret the meaning of the political thought that Jefferson bequeathed and only then endeavor to determine its significance for future conflicts and even current controversies. And it is always relevant to raise questions concerning the meaning of particular political theory that are referable to Jefferson’s social life-world and the purposes for which the political theory was formulated.

Jefferson follows the central starting point of the social contract tradition and its classical predecessors in presupposing two phrases to human associations. The first phase is a pre-political phase in which individuals are said to live in the so-called 'state of nature.' In contrast to Plato and Aristotle who saw the pre-political phase as ruled by a natural monarchy among individuals, Jefferson envisioned individuals in the state of nature as living in a state of equality. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson famously defines this equality in two ways. First, as an equality of condition –“all men are created equal.’ And second, as an equality of natural rights –as he put it, that men are endowed with equal, inalienable rights by their creator including the rights to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (Appleby & Ball, 1999, p.102).

Jefferson’s ideas as founding are greatly influenced by British philosopher John Locke. In his classic liberal values, Locke believed in natural law. He believed that people were rational beings who could use their reason to perceive the basic principles of natural law. Natural law, according to Locke, guaranteed each individual certain rights that could not legally be taken away, or alienated, without due process of law.

He summarized these inalienable rights as “life, liberty, and property.” Those above statements have a contradiction with Hobbes. Hobbes was very pessimistic about human nature. He believed that people were basically evil and that they would harm each other if

they were not subject to the control of an outside authority. Hence, Hobbes equated freedom with restraint by the government. Locke, by contrast, was very optimistic about human nature. He believed that governmental restraints on people were largely unnecessary (Baradat, 1984, p.68).

Another crucial argument that was to be the basic of Jefferson’s assumption about democratic government was his confidence on the abilities of common men in giving judgment on what was the best in their life together and their activities on participating in politics. Based on this confidence, Jefferson found that there was no any single reason to reject the democratic government. This Jefferson’s thought also showed the Enlightenment which stressed on the common sense in order to get the truth. He wrote to William Johnson in 1823:

We believed, with them, that man was a rational animal, endowed by nature with rights, and with an innate sense of justice; and that he could be restrained from wrong and protected in right by moderate powers, confined to persons of his own choice, and held their duties by dependence on his own will (Peterson, 1984, p.1470)

Thomas Jefferson is not only an idealist but he tends to a realist. In his concept of democracy, Jefferson realized in order not to be trapped on the perfect of human beings. In his *Notes on*

Virginia, he depicted that each government had the typical weakness of human beings.

In every government on earth is some trace of human weakness, some germ of corruption and degeneracy ... Every government degenerates when trusted to the rules people alone. The people themselves there are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe their minds must be improved to a certain degree. (Ibid, p.274)

Jefferson's confidence on the ability of people in giving rational critics was a significant characteristic in his concept of democracy. But Jefferson was also be wise in order to not to stress on the goodness of people in participating to determine the government's policies. The most important things here was people had to rid from the tyranny of foolishness.

Another crucial Jefferson's concept is the balancing of powers in government. The separation of powers in executive, legislative, and judicative (Hofstadter 1974:36). The balancing in the separation of powers and the crosscheck among the powers prove that power cannot be hold absolutely by someone of group in order not to abuse it. As Jefferson's writing in Peterson (Peterson, 1984, p.1380)

No, my friend, the way to have good and safe government, is not to trust it all to one, but to divide it among the many,

distributing to every one exactly the functions he is competent.

Both figures has given great contribution toward the development of democracy. Democracy is itself notoriously difficult to define. It does not consists of a single unique set of institutions. There are many models of democracy, and their diverse practices produce a similarly varied set of effects. According to Macpherson (Macpherson, 1977:20-21), "a model of democracy was a theoretical construction intended to exhibit and explain the real relations, underlying the appearances, between or within the phenomena under the study; to explain the probability or possibility of future changes in those relations; and with a concern for what id desirable or good or right." Based on the above definition, substantially, there is the distinction between direct democracy and indirect democracy, both of which are forms of political democracy.

Since the time of the Greek's democracy has been used to denote different types of government, but arguably all have a shared heritage which supplies a central core of meaning, Graham Maddox (Maddox, 1997, p.16) said:

Words such as democracy are shorthand reports intended to convey ideas about how are to behave as experienced people in matters regarding which each generation starts by having no experience. And if this is so, the term democracy is a carrier of historical experience whose meaning is stabilized

by an endless trial and error historical process.

This sense, democracy, then, is to be understood as a conveyor of accumulated experience. In order to assess the quality of American democracy, it will be useful to trick out some styles of democracy from the tapestry of the tradition. We shall then be in a better position to fit the American experiences into the wider backdrop.

Democracy in America has developed in various models from classical democracy to liberal democracy in the twenty-first century. The specific form democracy takes is contingent upon a country's socioeconomic conditions as well as its entrenched state structures and policy practices. According to Payne and Nasser (Payne & Nasser, 2003, p.30), "definitions of democracy have often depended on local conditions and special circumstances." For example, in America when it was still a New World, English settlers in America faced frontier conditions that emphasized the importance of the individual and helped in breaking down class distinctions and prejudices. These led to a democratic political structure marked by a high degree of individualism, civil liberty, and a government limited by law.

In the era of colonization and revolution, the ideas such as representation and individual rights were very crucial to be exposed. Thomas Jefferson as quoted by Allan Nevins and Henry S. Commager wrote

A certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, Government are instituted among men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

Democracy as a practical possibility of individualism is also linked with the rights of the people pertaining the government. Democracy refers not only to right of life, liberty and happiness individually and personally, but also to the rights of people in determining their own government. People have a central and strong position and right in establishing their own government system. They have rights to abolish the government if the government is corrupt or weak and institute again a new government that can secure and save their lives and freedom.

According to Hegel, a democratic political system is a historical necessity. Sooner or later, it comes to all societies. Human history shows that political systems changed from monarchy (in which one person rules) to oligarchy (a group rules) and lastly to democracy (all the people rule). A democratic political system, according to Hegel and later

picked up by Francis Fukuyama, is the end of history (Budiman, 1999, p.41).

I do not mean that I agree with his conclusion that we are arriving at the end of history by having a democratic political system. Democracy is something desirable, but it is also a project of capitalism to secure free market competition. Democracy does not solve the unjust economic exploitation of the poor by economically rich. Therefore, rather than arriving at the end of history, societies continue to struggle for a must society (Fukuyama, 1992, p.19).

It is to emphasize that democracy needs for continuous and progressive improvement with a view to perfecting democratic institutions in all their aspects and practical applications. Though, these will of course differ from country to country and from continent to continent, based on the lessons of experience.

Nowadays, some countries such as German, Chile, Japan, China, Malaysia, Thailand, and India claim their nations have adopted democracy principles. It must be remembered that each country has different background of sociology and culture. Therefore it has distinctive characteristic of democracy embodying on cultural values, for example, Indonesia has *Pancasila* democracy in New Order era. Here, *Pancasila* is as philosophical basis of the state.

China tends to equality-oriented democracy that adopted communism as the philosophical basis of the state. Meanwhile a term of liberal democracy is associated with western democracy.

As it is mentioned above, there is no single definition of democracy, much less in a liberal democracy. It means that democracy is always followed by local values. Democracy has no end. On the other hand, democracy cannot be taken for granted as something established once and for all, nor can it be viewed as a single model applicable work. On the contrary, democracy is an evolving system that is gradually enriched and fine-tuned in each country that adopts it in response to the socioeconomic, technological, and cultural changes to which today's open and dynamic societies are exposed.

Since the term of democracy is the paradigm case of the essentially contested concept, or one about which there is no agreed meaning. This is not to say, however, that the word lacks contents; in fact it is one of the richest concepts in heritage of political thought. According to Mas'ood (Mas'ood, 2004, p.3), "democracy is a system of government in which all adults persons within the unit of rule are entitled to participate equally in making general laws and policy. It is also supported by the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as political equals. And a crucial one that cannot be ignored is government's accountability.

In more recent times, definitions and practices of democracy vary widely. The United States is one of countries that practice it in the political life. In the U.S. Constitution, adopting some principles among others –the rule of law, a commitment to popular sovereignty, and a respect for the inalienable rights of individuals and minorities, make the U.S. Constitution an attractive model for emerging democracies. During the 18th and 19th centuries, many nations overthrew monarchs or established their independences from colonial power.

In the era of Jefferson and Tocqueville, the spirit of the Enlightenment also triggered the American Revolution and the French Revolution. The kind of radical thought expressed by Englishman Thomas Paine in *Commonsense* (1776) and *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) was taken up in a revolt over taxation in Britain's American colonies. The American Revolution (1775-1783) ended a colonial rule and led to the U.S. Constitution (1789); its Bill of Rights amendments (1791) became the classic statement of liberal rights, including the trial by jury and freedoms of religion, speech, press and assembly. French Revolution (1789) referred to the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. European liberalism became inextricably of national self-determination. In the Western world, democracy gradually became the norm.

American democracy as a model has a significant role in shaping of government type

for other countries over the world. Therefore, democracy is not only an American intellectual mind, but also a hemispheric mind. The existence of American liberal democracy is undeniably true. Sometimes, democratization is followed by backlashes in which some of the democratized countries became authoritarian again. However, the democratization always came back, and more countries became democratized. Therefore, the necessity of learning democracy is greatly needed to comprehend the phenomena around us, mainly social-political changes and the roles of government in economic affairs.

In some events, American democracy is closed to participatory democracy which would entail more active involvement by citizens in community affairs, social movements, and interest groups. Supporters of participatory democracy usually look to civic education to encourage a more politically interested and active citizenry. At earlier periods, Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville called it as an instrument of civic education. The associations in America clearly run well as a mediating structure between government and people.

Meanwhile, one critique of representative democracy like liberal democracy is that it centralizes power into the hands of a few or oligarchy democracy, thereby increasing the likelihood of corruption in and abuse of power by the government. In their works, Jefferson and Tocqueville also are afraid of the excess of centralized power. Citizens cannot participate in government, except by asking

their elected officials to listen to their views. To reduce this risk, most nations with representative democracies constitutionally separate powers to establish a system of checks and balances.

This study also finds that founding is merely not as an event, but also as a concept. Founding as a concept is an idea made up of many other ideas. As an idea, founding can be seen from the perspective of past, present, and future. Founding is a historically situated idea, comprised of other contested and ever changing ideas some more dominant than others, but all fighting to be heard. Therefore, founding can serve as a tool for change. By borrowing the thought of Heddy Shri Ahimsa-putra, “mythology figure” is closed to founding.

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