This book focuses on and examines the impact of cultural capital, political economy, social movements, and political consciousness on the potential development of substantive democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia. While explaining the challenges, obstacles, and opportunities for the development of democracy, *Cultural Capital and Prospects for Democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia* engages in defining democracy as a contested, open, and expanding concept through a comparative and historical examination. The book’s analysis employs interdisciplinary, multidimensional, comparative methods and critical approaches to examine the dynamic interplay among social structures, human agencies, cultural factors, and social movements. This comparative and historical study has required an examination of critical social history that looks at societal issues from the bottom up: specifically critical discourse and the particular world system approach, which deal with long-term and large-scale social changes.

*Cultural Capital and Prospects for Democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia* will be of interest to scholars and students of African politics, political theory, and democratization.

*Asafa Jalata* is Professor of Sociology and Global and Africana Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
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Cultural Capital and Prospects for Democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia

Asafa Jalata
Dedicated to Qeerroo/Qarree and others who have sacrificed themselves for abba biyyummaa and democracy.
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My desire for and commitment to social justice and freedom have inspired me to write this comparative book, which delves into complex cultural, economic, political, and ideological issues in Botswana, Oromia, and Ethiopia in relation to the development of democracy. I believe that human freedom cannot be achieved without democracy. Of course, democracy is not a simple concept—it is contested, open, and expanding as it challenges the knowledge and ideology of domination and exploitation. As the histories of many countries, such as the United States and South Africa, demonstrate, democracy did not eliminate racial slavery, colonialism, and apartheid for many centuries. Only the struggles of the oppressed peoples, women, and classes expanded democracy in the United States after the 1960s and in South Africa after 1991.

This book also explores how the principles and practices of democracy have emerged in different parts of the world since ancient times to demonstrate the contested and expanding meaning of democracy. Specifically, the cases of Athenian democracy in Europe and Oromo democracy in Africa are discussed in this book to show this reality and to challenge the idea that democracy’s origin is only in the West. Although the book mainly focuses on Botswana and Ethiopia, the issue of democracy is explored from a global perspective to illustrate the development and evolution of democracy.

The issues of freedom and democracy are practical and personal for me. I was born, raised, and educated until college in the Ethiopian Empire in which the Oromo and other ethnonations have been suffering under the yoke of colonialism, dictatorship, ignorance, famine, and poverty; these various peoples have faced severe social oppression, economic exploitation, cultural destruction, political authoritarianism, state terrorism, and gross human rights violations. When I was a high school and college student, I was involved in a student movement and later in the Oromo national movement, which resulted in my political exile. Successive racialized/ethnocratic Ethiopian state elites under the leadership of Amhara or Tigrayan ruling elites and their collaborators from other ethnonations have failed to introduce fundamental social changes that could have transformed the empire into a genuine multinational federal democracy.
The revolutions of 1974 and 1991 did not succeed in empowering the people to bring about democracy, and such failed revolutions produced the authoritarian-terrorist governments of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam from 1974 to 1991 and Meles Zenawi and his party, called the Ethiopian Peoples’ Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), from 1991 to 2018. Similarly, the revolutionary ruptures that emerged between 2015 and 2018, which were led by the Qerroo/Qaarree (Oromo youth) movement, have been facing a series of challenges because the youth movement did not develop the institutional and organizational capacity that could have fundamentally transformed the society by establishing a democratic state and an egalitarian multinational federal democracy.

Despite the fact that the EPRDF reorganized itself under the leadership of the reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in April 2018 due to the push of revolutionary upheavals from below, I am not yet sure whether a genuine democracy will emerge as promised. The successive Ethiopian state elites have butchered thousands of people and imprisoned, tortured, maimed, and raped in the name of so-called socialism or so-called revolutionary democracy. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Abiy has already started to order the EPRDF’s army and police to suppress the Oromo Liberation Army in Southern, Central, and Western Oromia, and to kill Oromo civilians, including women, elderly, and children. Of course, these actions undermine the promises he made when he came to power; he promised to protect human rights and to peacefully transition Ethiopia to democracy in 2020.

My wife, Zeituna Kalil, and I personally witnessed and experienced the brutality of the Ethiopian government. My wife, whom I met in the United States while we were participating in an Oromo conference in Washington, D.C., in 1985 and later married, ran away from her country because one Saturday morning, she saw the corpses of fourteen people she knew on the street in the Campus of HVA Sugar Company in Metahara. The seeing of the corpses left recurring nightmares for her, and she has continuously suffered from the psychological trauma of this awful event. The Ethiopian government engaged in the so-called Red Terror by killing several people and leaving their bodies on the street to terrorize the people of the area. After she saw the corpses, she was shocked and could not live in Oromia and Ethiopia, and decided to become a political refugee by walking by foot to Djibouti. The agent who was hired to transport her and other runaways left her in a desert because she was sick and could not walk. A group of people who were walking in this direction saw her lying in the desert and transported her on a camel back to the place called Dekil, where she stayed until she healed; then she entered into Djibouti. From Djibouti, the American Embassy gave her political asylum after studying her unique situation.

Before I left Oromia and Ethiopia as a political refugee in 1980, there were many days in which I also saw the corpses of people, which were left by agents of the military regime of Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam on the streets of Finfinnee (Addis Ababa), and since then, I have truly recognized
the criminal nature of the Ethiopian state. Furthermore, I was imprisoned several times because of my involvement in the student movement and in political activism. I was lucky enough to escape long imprisonment and death. In two separate occasions, plain-clothed security agents almost killed me in Finfinnee while I was walking. They ordered me to stop and put a loaded gun to my head as they searched for anti-government papers in my pockets. They allowed me to go after finding nothing. I was shocked because I could have been killed if they had found any document deemed to be critical of the government. I knew hundreds of Oromo comrades and others who were murdered or imprisoned and tortured for many years. To this day, I psychologically feel their pain and the suffering of their loved ones. I was also imprisoned for three months at the Holota military camp, which is not far from Finfinnee, with hundreds of other students without committing any crime. Overall, the Ethiopian state has continued to commit crimes against humanity with the financial and diplomatic support of global powers and international institutions rather than protecting its citizens.

In comparison, when I lived in Botswana in the 2014–2015 academic year as a Fulbright scholar, I found that the conditions in Botswana were totally different from those of Ethiopia. I found that Botswana has been peaceful, although its democracy is not yet substantive enough. Despite its democratic deficits, Botswana is still a stable and peaceful country. When I was in Botswana, there were no political prisoners in the country, and people were rarely suppressed for expressing their ideas. Political leaders walked freely without military protection. There were only problems of theft and robbery because of economic and social problems in the country.

My peaceful life and experience in the United States have further expanded my understanding and appreciation for social justice, freedom, and democracy. The political and intellectual commitment to social justice, freedom, and democracy that I started to develop when I was in Oromia and Ethiopia has grown and deepened due to my democratic experiences in the United States. These were cultivated and expanded by the struggles of African Americans and other progressive forces that legally overcame racial segregation and democratic deficits. However, the journey to a perfect democracy is not yet accomplished, even in the United States. Overall, living with freedom under democracy in my adopted country, the United States, has allowed me to further develop my human capabilities, which enabled me to have a profession of my choice and a better life, despite the challenges I have to face from being dislocated from my culture, extended families, and people. These opportunities were denied to me in the Ethiopian Empire because of my Oromo identity and political activism. Specifically, there is one thing that angered me and I still remember: Professor Andargachew Tesfaye, Dean of the School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University, stopped my appointment as a lecturer in 1978, when I graduated from the school because of my national identity and political opinion.
Most people in Oromia and Ethiopia have been prevented from developing their human capabilities and kept in ignorance and poverty. I believe that the people are under the tight control of the Ethiopian state, and they have not been able to solve their complex and difficult problems, primarily due to the absence of democracy. The Oromo and other peoples in Ethiopia need a kind of democracy that incorporates their indigenous democratic traditions. At the same time, the Amhara and Tigrayan ethnonational groups and their leaders need to abandon their main political culture of warfare; authoritarianism; and the worshipping of strongmen like Tewodros, Yohannis, Menelik, Haile Selassie, Mengistu Haile Mariam, and Meles Zenawi, who committed crimes against humanity. The mainstream Amhara-Tigray political culture is a roadblock to the development of democracy. Without removing this roadblock, the idea of a democratic transition will remain only a dream in Ethiopia.

To explain the significance of political culture, in this book, I examine the dynamic relationships among cultural capital, social movements, and democracy, and the possibility of developing a genuine multinational federal democracy in Botswana, Oromia, and Ethiopia. Also, the importance of social ruptures and revolutionary upheavals is addressed in relation to the development of democracy. In addressing these complex issues, I use a comparative approach, world system analysis, social movement theories, critical analysis, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

I critically examine the issues of culture and democracy, and their meanings, relationships, processes, characteristics, and developments. The development of democracy primarily depends on certain cultural norms and values, civic virtues and institutional patterns, tolerant political culture, and sociopolitical ruptures and social movements. In addition to these factors, the political consciousness of societies and the political knowledge and capacity of their social movements are very essential in mobilizing people to become involved in politics in order to establish democratic norms and governance, and to resist oppressive social forces, which are committed to advancing narrow political and economic interests. As I explain in this book, cultural capital and institutional patterns, such as kgotla (public assembly), have facilitated the development of federal democracy in Botswana. Similarly, the gadaalsiiggee system of Oromo democracy and the Negus (monarchical) system of the Amhara and Tigrayans are examined and compared by examining their roles in the development or hindrance of democratic transformations in Oromia and Ethiopia.

Asafa Jalata
Knoxville, Tennessee, March 2019
Acknowledgments

My wife, Zeituna Kalil, deserves my special appreciation for spending ten months with me in Botswana and for helping me in many ways in completing my research project. She sacrificed for me a lot because she believed that the research would help the Oromo and other peoples. She traveled with me day and night to different parts of Botswana, while I was traveling to interview people. The commitment she has to freedom, social justice, and democracy as well as her love for me enabled her to endure and suffer with me in a foreign culture and country.

I would also like to acknowledge Monageng Mogalakwe, Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at Botswana University, who was very helpful in introducing me to Botswana culture and to prominent politicians and activists whom I interviewed for this research project. I am grateful to him for collaborating with me in this research project and for taking Zeituna and I throughout different parts of Botswana. Furthermore, I appreciate my students at the University of Botswana for sharing with me information about their cultural values and their political system. Also, I express my thanks to a few members of the faculty of the Department of Sociology at the University of Botswana who assisted with this research.

My friend, Harwood Schaffer, deserves my thanks for carefully reading, commenting, and editing a few chapters of the book. Overall, I am indebted to the US Fulbright Senior Scholar Program for providing me a grant for the 2014–2015 academic year to teach and conduct research in Botswana.

The book focuses on the impact of cultural capital and political economy on the development of democracy in Botswana and Ethiopia. It is the result of the research I conducted in Botswana as Fulbright Scholar in the academic year of 2014–2015 and the product of my long-standing research on the Oromia regional state in Ethiopia and Ethiopia as a whole. The histories of Oromia (the Oromo country) and Ethiopia demonstrate that ignoring the cultural capital of the indigenous democracy, such as that of the Oromo, known as the gadaalsiiqqee system, and imposing an authoritarian/ethnocratic state on various ethnonational groups produces continuous economic and political crises (Jalata 2010).

Many African observers praise Botswana for achieving notable economic and democratic successes and peace (Samatar 1999), but condemn Ethiopia for its reputation of state crisis, recurrent famines, violence, and dictatorship (Toggia, Pat Lauderdale, and Zegeye 2000). Looking at these differences from an African perspective, my comparative study of these states asks the following: (1) What factors have contributed to Botswana’s democratic successes or failures, and how can more success be achieved in the future? (2) What factors have contributed to Ethiopia’s state violence, dictatorship, and perpetual crisis? (3) Why didn’t the Oromo develop their indigenous democracy into a contemporary one?

Through racial slavery, colonization, decolonization, and neocolonialism, almost all Africans have been exposed to dictatorship, violence, and poverty, and they have lost their independent leadership and institutions; their “flag independence” has yet to help most of them overcome these debilitating problems (Jalata 2016). Despite the false claim that Ethiopia was not colonized like other Africans, except during the five years of Italian occupation, various population groups, including the Oromo, were enslaved and colonized by the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism (Holcomb and Ibssa 1999). Similarly, Botswana was colonized by Great Britain. As V. G. Kiernan (1982: 230) puts it, “There are, after all, good reasons for prying into the past with historian’s telescope and trying to see more clearly what happened, instead of being content with legend or fantasy. Of all reasons for an interest in the colonial wars of modern times

# 1 Introduction
the best is that they are still going on, openly and disguised.” Botswana and a few other African countries have only overcome these problems to a certain degree, although the struggle continues to transform its procedural democracy to a substantive one. So, the question is why a few African countries can talk about their success stories when the majority of them are still facing crises and even state failures?

My argument is that the fashioning of its indigenous cultural resources and the borrowing of some modern democratic principles contributed to the political and economic successes of Botswana to a limited degree. Currently, the failures of various political projects have forced some political movements to incorporate indigenous solutions that can be integrated into the modern political democracies. For example, the current attempt to restore the Oromo democratic tradition is seen by some as a political opportunity for transition to democracy in Oromia and Ethiopia, and to solve ethnonational contradictions and promote sustainable development. In most African countries, including Ethiopia, today, the concept of democracy exists only on paper. Dictatorial African governments have prevented the development of political processes that can hold the chief executive and national legislators accountable. With the financial and military support they receive from other countries, these governments are engaging in zero-sum politics.

**Why Botswana and Ethiopia?**

I have learned from many sources and my research that after its independence, Botswana has been a peaceful country that practices parliamentary democracy and sustainable development, despite the fact that there are still democratic deficits. Botswana has developed into a stable and peaceful country because of the unity of its elites and less conflict among its ethnonational groups. A Fulbright award allowed me to study the experience and the limited success of Botswana, which is considered by many to be a model country in Africa because of its relative economic and political success. This Fulbright allowed me to observe and study the success and failure of this country. I have also extensively studied Oromia and Ethiopia for many years and published several scholarly articles and books.

Studying the politics of Oromia in relation to democracy is significant because of the size of its population, which is the largest ethnonational group in Ethiopia, and Addis Ababa (Finfinnee), the capital city of Oromia and Ethiopia, is located in the heart of Oromia, which is the center and economic backbone of Ethiopia. Understanding the essence of Ethiopian politics is also important because the empire is the centripetal force of the Horn of Africa, Africa, and beyond. Continental and international organizations, such as the African Union, and United Nations Organizations, including Economic Commission for Africa, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and others, are located in Finfinnee, Oromia, and Ethiopia, the
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empire that practices authoritarianism and state violence on the Oromo and other ethnonational groups.

Descriptions of Research Methodology

I have framed my research in a comparative historical and sociological perspective. In researching and writing this book, I have faced a difficult and complex task, encountering several conceptual, theoretical, and methodological challenges. To date, studies of democracy focus primarily on wide structural changes or behavioral issues and pay little attention to the role of human agency, social upheavals, and cultural issues. In order to overcome these limitations, this work has combined a structural approach with a social constructionist model of human agency, social movements, and cultural issues. Further, this work has employed the French Annales School approach, which rejects the overspecialization of social science disciplines by combining idiographic and nomothetic modes of analyses to understand collective human behavior in relation to social change, revolutions, and democracy.

The research has employed interdisciplinary, multidimensional, comparative methods and critical approaches to examine the dynamic interplay among social structures, human agency, governance, cultural factors, and movements. Recognizing the significance of such approaches for this kind of study, Theda Skocpol (1994: 333) notes,

convincing narratives of historical processes—at least narratives of those continuities and changes that are relevant to macroscopic social science—cannot be devised at all without the use of systematic comparative analyses to sort out causal hypotheses and discover new causal analogies. Without tough-minded, analytical comparisons—necessarily cutting through the webs of history for the duration of a given investigation—we can never get straight which structures matter, or which processes count.

This comparative and historical study has required critical social history that looks at societal issues from the bottom up: specifically, critical discourse and the particular world system approach that deals with long-term and large-scale global social changes. Data for this work were collected from interviews, archives, newspapers, historical and anthropological accounts, books and journals, government documents, biographies, electronic media, and other available sources.

Chapter 1 introduces the central issues, outlines and explains the theoretical and methodological insights, and develops the organization of the book. Chapter 2 examines the meaning of democracy as culturally and historically situated, limited, and expanded, with large-scale and long-term social changes. It demonstrates that starting from ancient times, a community
or a people, such as Athens, who were culturally connected to a limited geographical space started the practice of democracy. The privileges of democracy and equality were not shared within a population group and among different peoples, and what was democracy for one group could be slavery, colonialism, and dictatorship for others. The chapter also explores how democracy in its different forms emerged in ancient Athens; other societies, such as the Oromo; and later in Western Europe and North America. Recent research findings demonstrate that democracy existed in non-Western societies such as that of the Oromo for many centuries, although it was suppressed or partially destroyed by the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism during the Scramble for Africa. Looking back historically and culturally at the evolution of democracy in different parts of the world helps in clearly understanding how the concept of democracy in its ancient, classical, and modern settings has been evolving and expanding for many centuries.

Chapter 3 explains how progressive social movements have generally contributed to the development of political freedom and democracy in the world. It critiques social movement literature and provides theoretical insights for the analysis of the evolution of diverse social movements and their contributions to promoting democracy. The chapter also develops the theoretical insights that account for indigenous movements and their knowledge, which promotes the horizontal forms of organizations and egalitarian democracy. Finally, the chapter proposes how to envision a participatory and egalitarian democracy, which can help in balancing the interests of individuals and communities in a democratic system in order to reduce or destroy the systems of repression, domination, and exploitation.

Chapter 4 focuses on and explores the dialectical relationships among Tswana (the largest and dominant ethnonational group), culture, British colonialism, postcolonial leadership, and the essence of Botswana democracy, and reveals the challenges and problems of building substantive democracy in Botswana. It further explains how the precolonial Tswana culture and political economy affected the development of democracy in the country. In addition, the chapter explores how the European missionary and British colonialism dialectically interacted with the meraje (Kingdoms) and Tswana society, and produced the postcolonial political leadership that has effectively combined the political traditions of the kgotla system (public assembly) of the society and one party rule in the veneer and discourse of democracy. Finally, based on the criteria of the division of power amongst the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches that are supposed to maintain checks and balances in a democratic government, the chapter identifies and evaluates the accomplishments, challenges, and deficits of Botswana democracy, and proposes some measures that might help in overcoming these challenges and problems that have been roadblocks for transforming a procedural democracy into a substantive one.
Chapter 5 explains how the racialized/ethnicized Habasha (Amhara-Tigrayan) state in the Ethiopian Empire has created a political roadblock for the emergence and development of democracy, despite the fact that the empire has frequently confronted social ruptures, upheavals, wars, and revolutions. It identifies and critically examines four major factors that have prevented the transformation of the Habasha state into a multinational democracy. First, it explains how the convergence of cultural identity, religion, and political power created a political culture of authoritarianism that has ignored the life, liberty, and human rights of its multinational populace by enabling the ethnocratic Ethiopian state to survive from its creation to the present. Second, it explores how the Euro-American intervention on the side of Amhara-Tigray successive state elites has provided them with external legitimacy. Third, it focuses on and explains the essence and consequences of the policies and practices of authoritarianism in Abyssinia/Ethiopia proper and racism and state terrorism and gross human rights violations in Oromia and other colonized nations. Finally, the chapter explains how Ethiopian state policies and practices have undermined the processes of democracy, peace, and development.

Chapter 6 examines why the Tswana traditional political culture and institutions were somewhat relevant for laying the foundations of political stability and limited democracy in postcolonial Botswana. The chapter addresses five major interrelated issues: First, it examines the process and evolution of Tswana political culture and the emergence of merafe (kingdoms), bogosi (kingship), and kgosi (king). Second, it identifies and explains by the process of the consolidation of kingdoms, kingships, and dikgosi (kings), and their roles in the areas of politics, military, economic, and religion. Third, it discusses the role of kgotla (public assembly) under the leadership of kgosi in formulating unwritten customary laws and policies, and in addressing and resolving a series of social, political, and economic problems through open and lengthy public discussions and deliberations. Fourth, the chapter explains the processes of social stratifications and their consequences in the kingdoms. Finally, it describes how the Tswana traditional political culture and institutions contributed to the development of limited legitimate power of the kgosi and after decolonization to the development of limited or procedural democracy and political stability in postcolonial Botswana.

Chapter 7 focuses on the current political changes and the possibility of transition to democracy in Oromia and Ethiopia. First, it identifies and explains factors that facilitated the development of youth protest movements in Oromia and how these movements expanded to the other regional states. Second, the chapter explains the essence and characteristics of the peaceful protest movements for four years and how these movements demolished and reorganized the Tigrayan-led authoritarian government of Ethiopia. Third, it identifies and explains the mechanisms that Tigrayan political elites and their collaborators used to abort political changes and why they did not
succeed in their efforts. Fourth, the chapter addresses the possibility of transition to democracy in Oromia and Ethiopia.

The final chapter examines how the development of democracy mainly depends on certain cultural norms, values, civic virtues, institutional patterns, tolerant political culture, and sociopolitical ruptures and social movements. It also demonstrates how the political consciousness of societies, their political knowledge, and the capacity of their social movements are necessary to involve in politics in order to establish democracy by challenging the dominating social forces, which are committed to establishing and maintaining dictatorship to advance their narrow political and economic interests. First, this chapter identifies and examines the cultural capital, such as civic virtue, and other factors that facilitate the emergence and consolidation of democracy in various societies. Second, the issue of cultural capital is addressed comparatively in Botswana, Oromia, and Ethiopia in facilitating or hindering the development of democracy. Specifically, the potential contributions of *kgotla* (public assembly) and the kingdoms of Tswana in Botswana, the *gadaalsiiqqee* system of Oromo democracy in Oromia, and the *negus* (monarchical) system in Ethiopia are examined and compared in the development or hindrance of democratic states. Third, the role of *Qeerroo/Qarree* (Oromo youth) led peaceful movement in advancing the agenda of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational federal democracy in Oromia and Ethiopia is explored. Finally, the chapter addresses the challenges of implementing the principle of national self-determination and establishing egalitarian multinational democracy in Botswana, Oromia, and Ethiopia.

**Notes**

1 Cultural capital involves codes, norms, values, and institutional patterns in a society, which influence the actions of individuals and groups in that society. Pierre Bourdieu identifies different forms of capital: “economic capital, which is ... directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of private property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible ... into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of [position of power] and educational qualifications; and as social capital, made of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible ... into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.” His theories of cultural capital should not be limited to formal education, and they must also include informal education, which plays a significant role in promoting social justice, fairness, and democracy, or/and in maintaining status quo in class, gender, and ethnonational hierarchies. See www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm, accessed on 11/09/2017.

2 *Gadaaa* was a form of constitutional government of the Oromo. It was practiced through the election of political leaders by adult male suffrage every eight years; corrupt leaders would be removed from power through *buqisu* (recall) before their official tenure. See Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System* (Trenton, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 2006). *Siqqee* is a sub-set of *gadaaa*, and I use the terms *gadaalsiiqqee* to designate the concept of Oromo democracy.
When the Oromo, who are estimated to be between 40% and 50% of the Ethiopian population, try to utilize their democratic tradition to introduce democracy to Ethiopia, the minority Tigrayan-led Ethiopian government, which comprises 6% of the population, opposes democracy, despite the fact that it claims in its constitution to be practicing democracy. Similarly, the Amhara elites struggle to perpetuate an ethnonational hierarchy at the cost of democracy to maintain Amhara privileges. They vehemently oppose and attack the principles of national self-determination and multinational federal democracy.


2 Bourdieu identifies three main forms capital, namely economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital: “economic capital … is … directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of private property rights; … cultural capital … is convertible … into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of [position of power] and educational qualifications; and … social capital, made of social obligations (‘connections’) … is convertible … into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.” Pierre Bourdieu, ibid.

3 News of the revolts of 1848 reached the United States and American Fourierists supported them and sent delegates to France. The Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention also emerged in 1848 as the beginning of the Women’s rights movement in the United States. Later, radical feminism and suffrage movements developed on the global stage.

4 Based on more than four decades of ethnological research findings of Anthropologist Richard Lee, Bruce G. Trigger (2006: 25) notes, social and political equality in hunter-gatherer societies was not direct expression of human nature. His evidence indicates that hierarchical behavior was actively suppressed in hunter-gatherer societies, where economic and political egalitarianism had great adaptive advantages, as well as in some of the more mobile middle-range societies. Contrariwise, in more complex societies competitive behavior was supported and reinforced by the state.

5 Guddina is a concept that explains how Oromo society improves itself by creating new experiences and adding them to its existing cultural life. Gabbina is the next concept that explains the enrichment of cultural experiences by integrating the cumulative past experiences with the contemporary ones through broadening and deepening the system of knowledge and worldview. Without Oromo democracy, there is no sustainable and egalitarian sociocultural development. Ballina refers to the expansion of enriched cultural experiences from one society to another through the reciprocity of cultural borrowing, based on the principles of social equality, fairness, and social justice. The cumulative experiences of guddina, gabbina, and ballina lead to the stage of badhadha. This phase is the stage of wholeness and peace. According the Oromo tradition, this stage indicates the maintenance of peace among Waaqa (God), nature, and society; theoretically speaking, there is no conflict, poverty, disease, or natural calamity because of the balance between Waaqa, nature, and society is maintained. The development of badhadha leads to the stage of hoormata. In this stage, people, animal, and other living things reproduce and multiply because of the availability of conditions such as availability of rain, resources, and peace. The next stage is dagaaga, which is the phase of development cycle that is integrated to maintain an even and sustainable development of society. The final phase is daga-hoora in which full development takes place in the Oromo society and expands to neighboring societies through reciprocity, sharing, and cultural borrowing.
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These kingdoms were lineage clusters that trace their descent from one legendary ancestor, Masilo, who is thought to have lived between 1460 and 1560. The Tswana of Botswana are a small part of the larger Sotho-Tswana ethnolinguistic group found in the interior of the Southern African subcontinent.

For instance, social scientists have studied about Oromo democracy known as the *gadaa* system, which existed before Western democracy. The *gadaa* system has the principles of checks and balances (through periodic succession of every eight years), and division of power (among executive, legislative, and judicial branches), balanced opposition (among five parties), and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent dictatorship.

Classic revolutions, such as the American (1775–1783), French (1787–1799), Haitian (1791–1804), Russian (1905–1917), Mexican (1910–1920), and Chinese (1889–1949), and other national liberation movements emerged and consolidated between the 18th and 20th centuries.

The new political structure that initially emerged with capitalism in Western Europe was the absolutist state. This state was required to balance the actions of the competing social forces such as monarchies, the aristocracy, feudal lords, the nascent capitalist class, the peasantry, and the emerging working class.

With the declaring of liberal democracy and the nation-state in the West, the processes of class, racial/ethnolinguistic and gender stratification and oppression and colonial expansion consolidated on regional and global levels. State nationalism and bourgeois democracy have been concealing the contradictions that exist among the citizens of the nation-state; the concept of citizenship has been glossing over the real contradiction between the ideological claims of democracy and equality of citizens and the vast material differences that have been structured into socioeconomic conditions of distinct social forces within the nation-state.

Currently, betraying its revolutionary position and following the footsteps of the West and the former Union, China has engaged in neocolonialism and neoliberal economic agendas to loot the resources of Africa and others.

Despite the fact that there are disagreements on the size of the Oromo population because of political reasons, it is an undisputable fact that the Oromo are the largest ethnolinguistic group in the empire. Numerically speaking, the Oromo are larger than the combined size of Amharas and Tigrayans that have been dominating and controlling the Ethiopian colonial state successively for more than a century.


Ibid.

Telephone interview with Abbaa Caalaa Lataa who was responsible for the Political Department of the Oromo Liberation Front, on June 18, 2017.

Ibid.

The Oromo took coordinated actions as a people only in the 16th and 17th centuries under the *gadaa*siiqqee system to establish their country by fighting against the Christian and Muslim empire builders in the Horn of Africa.

Telephone interview with Dessalegn Nagari on June 18, 2017.

Telephone interview with Abbaa Biqila (lagasse Deti), (Lagassee Deti), one time Secretary of the Board of MTA and the secretary of the Cultural, History and Religion, on June 21, 2017.

Telephone interview with Dessalegn Nagari on June 18, 2017.

Telephone interviews with Dessalegn Nagari, Beekan Guluma, and Garbaba Gadissa on June 17 and 18, 2017.
11 Ibid.
12 Telephone interview with Abbaa Caalaa Lataa on June 18, 2017.
13 Interview with Diribi Demisse Boku, President of the Macha-Tulama Association, Greenbelt Station, Maryland, August 20, 2016. Telephone interviews with Garbaba Gadisa and Dessalegn Nagari, ibid.
14 Telephone interview with Abbaa Biqila (Lagassee Deti) on June 21, 2017.
15 Ibid. Interview with Diribi Demisse Boku on August 20, 2016, Greenbelt Station, Maryland.
16 Ibid.
17 Abbaa Biqila, ibid.
18 Telephone interview with Beekan Guluma, ibid.; Diribi Demissie, ibid.
19 Telephone interviews with Beekan Guluma and Dessalegn Nagari, ibid.
20 Telephone interview with Abbaa Caalaa Lataa on June 18, 2017.
21 Ibid.
22 Telephone interview with Dessalegn Nagari on June 24, 2017.
23 Dessalegn Nagari, ibid.
25 Dessalegn Nagari, ibid.
27 Abbaa Caalaa Lataa, ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Telephone interview with Diribi Demissie Boku, President of MTA, on August 20, 2016, Greenbelt Station, Maryland.
30 Abbaa Caalaa, ibid.
31 Dessalegn Nagari, ibid.
33 Ibid.; Beekan Guluma, ibid.
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