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INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP STYLES AND CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: A CASE OF THE ETHIOPIAN GADA SYSTEM

> "We study African cultures so that they may live and grow to become the enduring foundation of a distinctive African civilization. In that process of growth, every culture has something vital to offer. Man's wider cultural identities must be allowed to grow, not by the predatory expansion of one civilization, but by the complementary integration of many diverse cultures. No human community, however humble, should be forced to give up its cultural identity without making a critical contribution to the larger reality of which it becomes a part. That remains true whether the larger reality is national culture, pan-African culture, or universal culture." Asmerom Legesse (Gada, 1973, ix)

Introduction

This paper is interested in establishing the nature and idea of the role or relevance of moral responsibility in African indigenous political leadership as a prior solution toward the current *lack of respect for rule of law* in African political leadership- from the perspective of Oromo community. It is obvious that, since the time of independence many African countries have been drowned into serious political malaises. Just to mention but few like dictatorship, absence of smooth transition in political systems, lack of respect for rule of law, political corruption, democracy absent or dysfunctional, imprisonments, forced disappearance, etc that cause insecurity, displacement, destruction and misery as opposed to the common good of a society can be typically described as political malaises. There are strong tendencies and concepts among African nations, writers and politicians that one of the solutions we obviously need to eradicate those political malaises in Africa is *the rule of law*. Nevertheless, this remedy that has been attempted again and again in Africa could never erase those political crises due to the failure of African political leaders to maintain the very fact of moral responsibility that was a criterion for one to be a leader in African indigenous political leadership.

The functions of moral principles within the rule of law are consistent with all the essential characteristics of African indigenous political understanding. This is indispensable and very significant for the realization of fundamental moral values in every African nation- that justifies the inseparability of the rule of law and morality. This concept of rule of law arises from practical experience that makes values and norms its foundation than mere and abstract

principles. Though, the modern concept of rule of law fails to recognize this fact; but for the African indigenous political leadership is the two are inseparable. Therefore, there is a great respect and tendency for the rule of law that portrays the very essence of the African perspective on the nature of the connection between rule of law and morality. This paper, therefore, attempts to explore some of the chief ways in which the rule of law and morality are intimately connected in African indigenous political leadership. Plus, it attempts to address the role of morality in the same political arena in the light of Gada political system of Oromo community- as the prior solution to the current unhealthy or disordered condition of African politics- typically toward the lack of respect for the rule of law that African nations are actually experiencing.

Conventional Concept of the African Mentality

Until recently, in the history of civilization, the West regarded Africans as a people who were not capable of a philosophical mode of inquiry and as a result lacked civilization. Consequently the usage of the terms savage, primitive, pre-logical, zombie etc., were predicated of Africans.

Masolo captures the essence of the Hegelian view when he states that according to Hegel: "Africans live in a state of innocence. They are unconscious of themselves, as in the natural and primitive state of Adam and Eve in the biblical paradise before the emergence of reason and will. Africans are intractable. The condition in which they live is incapable of any historical development or culture." (Masolo, 1995)

The Hegelian view later found a disciple in the person of Lucien Levy-Bruhl who popularized the view. Lucien Levy-Bruhl emphasizes that: "The Africans are not familiar with its operation: the slightest abstract reasoning tires them and becomes immediately harassing. Why? Because they do not have at their disposal the indispensable logical material which makes these operations simple and reasoning easy" (Levy-Bruhl, 1975, 126)

To Europeans blackness symbolized everything that was negative. For example during a visit to the coast of Guinea in 1566, Walter Wren was totally surprised to see that "Although the people were black and naked, they were civil." (Mungazo, 1996, XXIII) It is clear that Wren did not expect the people of Guinea to have any cultural refinements because they were black.

Recently, Noble Prize Laureate Dr. James D. Watson held an interview with the Sunday Times in Britain on October 14, 2007. He said that black people had lower intelligence levels than the others, presumably the whites. The obvious outcome of associating blackness with inferior intellect is the reason why Africa has been known as the "Dark Continent."

This is what led Kenneth Knorr to the conclusion that European colonial governments systematically sought to reduce the Africans to a position where they were forced to become "raw material to be employed in the service of the white man. The Africans were not allowed to decide for themselves because they were considered incapable of doing so. It was therefore decided for them, to serve the white man as his master." (Knneth, 1974, 375)

During the height of the colonial systems, from 1885 to 1914 and from 1919 to 1939, the colonial governments formulated policies that can best be understood in the context of their effort to control the indigenous people of Africa. For example, Germany formulated the policy of

Deutsche Kolonialbund, France and Belgium introduced the policy of evalue, Britain developed a policy known as indirect rule, and Portugal had a policy known as Estado Novo. The Boers had a policy known as apartheid.

The question is, is it true that Africans had no capability of thinking and Africa had no rule of laws? This will force us to consult the pre-colonial history of Africa. It is not the scope of this paper to consult all the African history but the paper shall focus on the African Indigenous Political Leadership styles only.

A Historical Overview of African Indigenous Political Leadership Styles

Indigenous leadership is an institution that has developed over many hundreds of years in Africa. It has served the people of Africa through wars, periods of slavery, famine, freedom struggles, economic and political restructuring, and during colonial and post colonial periods. (A White Paper 2000) It is an enduring institution that has survived more than two centuries of change because it has the confidence and support of local peoples.

Above all the indigenous leadership is a leadership that relies on the common concept of indigenous African society that has a basis or understanding ties of family, clan and community. This paves a way for practical democracy in the current African political leadership. "It gives freedom to live within your society comfortably without hurting anyone and without being hurt by anyone." (Mailu, 1997) Therefore, the whole concept of governance that entails within the rule of law is not a new ideology for African indigenous political leadership.

They played a critical role on the custodian of culture and traditions. They were closely linked with grassroots, and so understood the problems of their society intimately. (Mailu, 1997, 65). This kind of political leadership brought about peace and security in creating fair and transparent rules and systems that were considered legitimate, endorsed by the society and which perpetuate the leaders without conflict. Thus, "if there was any form of democratic governance in Africa, then it was during the pre-colonial period." (Wanyama, 2000, 107)

Indigenous African societies had a system of government whereby moral responsibility played a major role, in the light of a set of rules, laws and traditions that typically established how the people would live together peacefully as part of larger group. Unlike today, rule of law was indigenous both to African societies and leaders. Laurent Magesa depicted that "Leaders at the higher levels of the lineage, clan, solidarity or ethnic group represent and personify the life force of the entire people more intensively than the family heads. They also personify the order of the world and the harmony that enables its life to continue for the benefit of humanity." (Magesa, 1998)

Unlike the current political leadership, the very concept of indigenous political leadership of Africa rooted in the belief of each society whereby everybody partakes to determine political, economic, social and cultural systems. In this way the principle of political leadership becomes transcended the realm of politics and constituted on integral part of the people's culture which allowed everyone a sense of belonging.

Good governance and moral dimension in governance were well recognized and known in African political systems in the past than in the present African political system. "The power of chiefs and often balanced by the council of elders, a chief ruling by consent and by being the representative of all the peoples. The idea of participation was at the basis of African political systems." (Hassen, 1994, 189)

The philosophical aspect that has been laid under this kind of indigenous political system surpasses a mere concept of leadership and characterized by its leaders' critical or inner thoughts, beliefs and expectations for societal performance. Both the leaders and the community have a genuine reflection about their personal leadership of philosophy, through their communal life. As opposed to vagueness of current political leadership, African indigenous political leadership is so clear, concise, energetic, creative, relevant and achievable toward the vision of the society. The vision in turn promotes justice, decisiveness, integrity, enthusiasm, loyalty and courage and not only in the affairs of politics but also in the arena of social, economical and anthropological, affairs of a society through which the rational investigation of the same indigenous leadership carried out.

The critical analysis of relationship, influence, tasks, power, thoughts and visions with in African indigenous political leadership do pave a way for the leaders to ensure equality and rationality of any society that lead to collective decision in accordance with the rule of law than having solely individual aspects like modern political leadership.

Given the less complicated nature of the pre-colonial nature of political organization in Africa, the colonialists found Africans very gullible people. They immediately took advantage of this situation, and made great good for themselves. This was the beginning of colonialism. As a result of colonialism, Africa found itself in very strange and unfamiliar political contexts. The leader was not to be morally determined, but another category of force of contracts had to be followed. The political dispensations created by these newcomers became drastically divorced from the indigenous African system.

One great problem was brought by the use of power by the colonialists. "The colonial state needed a great deal of arbitrary power to subordinate the colonial territory, to exploit it, and to protect it from the hostilities unleashed by its dehumanising treatment of its victims that put it in a permanent state of war against indigenous society." (Mailu, 1997, 9) The post colonial African leader took this system in its entirety and applied it without reservation.

As Chando puts it rightly "Most of the nationalist leaders who came to power at independence decided to inherit the colonial state rather than transform it in accordance with nationalist aspirations. This isolated them, and they became increasingly dependent on force to suppress a population that was inclined to revolt against their betrayal and unimpressive performance in office…" (Chando, 1998, 18). African political leaders betrayed the vision and hope of Africans.

Political Independence and the Betrayal of the African People

The euphoria with which the Africans celebrated independence quickly gave way to the Tower of Babel phenomenon. The unity of purpose that had brought the Africans together to struggle

for independence quickly ended in an intense struggle for personal power. The interests of people were replaced by the interests of politicians.

The betrayal of the African people has been one of the great tragedies in human history. This tragedy is evident in two forms. (Mungazi, 1996) The first is that the African politicians have denied their people an opportunity to participate in the events of their countries in meaningful ways because they have reinstituted either one-man dictatorship or one-party regimes that care little for the welfare of their people.

The second form of the betrayal of the African people has been the violent military coups that have swept across the continent with impunity. More vicious and more brutal than colonial regimes, the military regimes show neither sensitivity to the needs of the people nor any ability to restore their countries political stability and democracy.

We can make disturbing conclusions about attainment of political independence and the betrayal of the African people. The conclusion is that amidst all the excitement over independence, the African political leadership invariably failed to understand two fundamental principles as they assumed responsibility for governing: One, the need to ensure that constitutional provisions had to be respected even if they were inadequate; this inadequacy could later be removed by constitutional amendments and would prevent the practice of restoring to violence; and Two, the idea that the government belonged to the people and that it was first and foremost for the people. (Mungazi, 1996) Failure to uphold these two basic principles constituted the ultimate betrayal of the African people. The colonial governments cannot be blamed for the failure of the Africans to uphold these principles.

Late Basil Davidson captured the meaning of the betrayal of the African people when he wrote in 1992: "the actual and present condition of Africa is one of the deep troubles, a deeper trouble than the worst imposed during the colonial years…" (Basil, 1992, 9)

Political Leadership in Africa and Lack of Respect for the Rule of Law

As we know one of the many ways in which human societies can be distinguished from animal groups is by reference to social rules. (Phil, 2007, 1)

In a general sense law constitutes a set of rule i.e. commands, prohibitions and entitlements (Andrew, 2002, 107) that regulates the life of the individual in accordance with the will of the community, so as to secure conformity to the standards of social life which the community deems essential to its well-being.

Since the time of independence most African nations have come out with their rules of law hoping that good political leadership would come to the continent. Nevertheless, unlike pre-colonial Africa the post colonial period has been subject to the lack of respect for the rule of law which brought about political turmoil among African society.

For instance, the promotion and protection of the rule of law in African indigenous political leadership that recognizes the very concept of the same rule of law itself as a prerequisite to

stable democracy and sustainable social and economic development has been eradicated from present African political leadership.

The critical analysis of the rule of law does show that it is undeniably important to peaceful, free and prosperous of societies whereby a firm and stable social order has been assured. Unfortunately, the African political leadership has been experiencing lack of respect for the rule of law since independence that has been led the continent to severe political malaises. The nation that the powers of the state and government can be exercised legitimately only in accordance with applicable laws and according to laid down procedures has been far-fetched for most present African nations due to lack of respect for the rule of law.

Robert I. Rotberg clearly depicted that: during the past three decades roughly 90 per cent of Sub-Saharan Africa's leaders have behaved despotically, governed poorly, eliminated their people's human and civil rights, initiated or exacerbated existing civil conflicts, decelerated per capital economic growth and proved corrupt. (William, 2001, 350)

The culture of respect for the rule of law has been deeply wrenched that brought warfare and violence to the continent. Raymond W. Capson stated that

> During the 1980's Africa was torn by nine wars numerous others instances of large-scale violence, conflict, and a kaleidoscope of coups, riots and demonstrations. These hostilities exacted a great toll on Africa in terms of the destruction of human life, cultural damage, economic disruption and lost investment opportunities.… (Francis and Zartman, 1991, 22-23)

On the other hand, for example, at the beginning of 1990, all but five of Africa's 54 countries were dictatorship, either civilian or military. Before 1990 no Africa leaders hold left office thorough electoral defeat, those that did leave were mostly ousted in coups. (Tityambe and Mcconnadughay, 2004, 2). In line with this, it is adequate to scrutinize the violation of the rule of law in current Ethiopian political leadership as a case study.

The Violation of the Rule of Law and the Case of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is found in East – Northern Africa bordered on the west by the Sudan, the east south by Somalia, the east by Djibouti, the south by Kenya, and the North and North East by Eritrea. She is African oldest independent country -except a five year of Italian occupation, 1936 – 1941. (Bahru, 1991, 150-177) Ethiopia is also a cradle of humankind her culture and traditions date back over 3,000 years. (Kevin, 1995, 1-13) Nevertheless, the country has been devastating by war, drought, famine and ill conceived policies for a long period of time under different regime that brought millions to the brink of starvation, political detentions and turmoil and long civil conflict. Above all the violation of the rule of law in Ethiopia has been most the order of the day. (Bahru, 1991, 262)

After the rebel group Tigray People Liberation Front (1974-91) took political power in 1991 by overthrowing the Derge regime, the respect for the rule of law in Ethiopia has been going from bad to worse. Even though, the 1995 constitution offers sound principle for democratic procedure and human rights, the ruling party has been continuously faulted for illegal violation

of human rights, political interference with the judiciary, and suppression of freedom of the press, since its promulgation. (Seyom, 2006, 36)

Therefore the situation within Ethiopia's legal system, especially in the federal courts, leaves one wondering if justice can really be administered typically according to the rule of the country. (Lammi, 1997, 1)

The regime's each decision making with the view to stay in power is based on political consideration rather than rule of law per se. This is so obvious from recent open letter of Oromo Studies Association to the UN Secretary General on Land Grub and Evictions in Oromia whereby the 21st new colonization and modern slavery in Ethiopia (Oromia) has been portrayed. (Haile, 2010, 25) The intimidations and the arrests and persecution of students, politicians and journalists are clear evidence of brutal action of authoritarian leadership of the EPRDF regime. (Taye, 2008, i-xii)

The Ethiopian indigenous political leadership and its democracy that allows each nation and member of a society to have full freedom of choice and living in a free, tolerant and compassionate society without infringing on the rights of the others is far- fetched in Ethiopia, unless the present political leaders recognize the role of morality as in the indigenous political leadership toward respect for the rule of law. The divorce of morality from modern political leadership affects severely not only the Ethiopian sovereign state but also it widely paved a way for African nations to fall into political malaises especially in violating the rule of law which is considered as the essence of democracy in political leadership.

As we are going to demonstrate in this paper the remedy for the lack of respect for the rule of law in Ethiopia and Africa can be eradicated only when the political leaders and all the citizens of the continent come to recognize the role of morality in political leadership and allow themselves to stick to some indigenous values that can help us in transforming the bond paradigm of current political leadership.

Gada System and its Rule Of Law as the Basis Of Democratic and Egalitarian System

Currently, most of the political practices in African continent are mainly relying on the western governmental principles than implementing indigenous political aspects. The values that entails within African indigenous leadership are also overlooked.

Whatever distortions appears it is time to unfold the democratic and egalitarian political system of indigenous Africa and philosophically demonstrate the possibility and presence of concrete moral responsibility in rule of law within African political leadership. Gada system of Oromo community, therefore, has been chosen as the exemplary character and case study toward the role of moral responsibility in respecting the very practice of rule of law in indigenous African politics to eradicate the lack of respect for rule of law in present African political arena and to show the needs and relevance of indigenous moral responsibility for current political leadership in African continent.

The Oromo of Ethiopia

"The Oromo constitute a good half of the population of Ethiopia." (Mohammed, 1994, xi) They are one of the most numerous communities in Africa. (Baxer, Hultin and Triulzi, 1996, 7)

Let us keep aside some important aspect such as Oromo's homeland, history, language, religion, living condition, heritage, education, etc and try to focus on Gada political system and its rule of law which they have been developed during their long history from philosophical perspective as the main theme of this paper.

The meaning and concept of Gada System

The very term 'Gada' is not easy to define precisely. Even though it is recognized by all Oromos as a key to the unique heritage of Oromo political, social and cultural life; the term can be used for so many concepts that it has lost any single meaning. (Hassaen, 1994, 9)

Professor Asmarom Legesse who has been extremely and vastly studied the complex Gada system, however, states that: The term Gada cannot be given a univocal interpretation. It stands for several related ideas. It is first of all the concept standing for the whole way of life. More specifically, however, it refers to any period of eight years during which a class stays in power. (Asmerom, 1973, 81)

The Gada system is an administration system of classes (luba) that succeeded each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each Gada class remains in power during a specific term which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony.

The complex system of Gada has an arrangement of social categories usually called sets of classes, an arrangement of tasks or work to be performed and an arrangement of principles and rules of law, respectively. Gada system, therefore, does work through two well-defined ways of classifying male members of the society, that is the *hiriyya* (members of an age-set all born within the period of one Gada rule of eight years) and Gada grade (stages of development through which a Gada class passes).

The male members of the Oromo society were classified into generation–sets and Gada grades. The set is the group of people who share the same status and who perform their rites of passage together, whereas the grades are the stages of development through which the groups pass. (Hassan, 1994, 19)

According to Mohammed Hassen and many authors the full cycle of the Gada system is ten grades whereby an individual entered the first grade at birth and left the last grade at the Gada age of eighty. After that he retired. (Hassan, 1994, 20)

The following are called the Gada grades namely:

1. Daballe grade (0 – 8 years of age)
2. Folle or Game Titiqaa grade (8 – 16 years of age)
3. Qondalla or Game Gurgudaa grade (16 – 24 years of age)
4. Kuusa or Raba grade (24 – 32 years of age)
5. Raaba Doorii or Doorii grade (32 – 40 years of age)
6. **Gada grade (40 – 48 years of age)**
7. Yuba I grade (48 – 56 years of age)
8. Yuba II grade (56 – 64 years of age)
9. Yuba III grade (62 – 72 years of age)
10. Gadamojii grade (72 – 80 years of age) (Melba, 1985, 20)

To analyze and synthesize this core of Gada system and its rule of law in the light of philosophy; let us refer to the names of fathers and sons which are characterized in the cyclical movement of the forty years, which repeat it after every eight years.

Fathers	**Sons**
1. Melbaa	1. Harmuufaa
2. Muudanaa	2. Roobalee
3. Kilollee	3. Birmaji
4. Biifolee	4. Mullataa
5. Michille	5. Duulo(Melba 1985, 21)

What kind of rule of law and political system in reality laid under this complex Gada system?

The most important class of the whole system is Gada or Luba grade. This is the time when the members of the same grade attain full status and take up their position at the ruling Gada class according to the rule of law.

The Gada stage is the heart of the system, the kernel of the whole complex institution. In the true sense of the term the Gada stage is a landmark in the history of the grade that is coming to power. It is at this stage that every refining set left its mark on the nation through its political and ritual leadership. "The strongest indication that is imparted its name and its ritual attributes to the period of history when it was Gada." (Hassan, 1994, 3)

According to G. Melba this Gada stage has the following officials and duties according to the Tuulama Gada practice

1. Abbaa Bokku – President
2. Abbaa Bokku first – Vice president
3. Abbaa Bokku second – Second vice president
4. Abbaa Chaffe – Chairman of the Assembly
5. Abbaa Dubbi – Speaker who presents the direction of the presidium of the Assembly
6. Abbaa Seera – Memorizer of the Laws and the results of the Assembly's deliberations
7. Abbaa Alanga – Judge who executes the decision

8. Abbaa Duula – In charge of the Army
9. Abbaa Sa'a – In charge of the Economy (Melba, 1985, 22)

How this organizational aspects of rule of law in Gada political system does function? Since it is absolutely impossible to isolate morality from rule of law in the Gada political system the philosophical analysis of this political organization and its function will be dealt with the next subtopic whereby the role of morality would be unfolded against the lack of respect for rule of law.

The philosophical aspects of *Saffu* (Morality) and Rule of law in Indigenous Political Leadership of Gada system

The extraordinary organization of Gada political system and its rule of law and intimate relationship with morality have made or influenced social scientists of diverse backgrounds to study it extensively at different times, where they discovered the very essence of real democracy. In 1868 W. Plowden, for instance, stated that "…among republican systems, Gada is superior." (Melba, 1985, 25) Asmarom Legesse also described the Gada system as "one of the most astonishing and instructive turns the evolution of human society has taken." (Melba, 1985, 24-25) What made Gada highly sophisticated system as such?

The very system of Gada is distribution and utilization of the national forces that guided with by rule of law and *Saffu* (morality) than ownership or dictatorship. This system typically organizes social life around the series of five generation grades which assign obligations as well as rights to all males in the society.

Females are linked, through men especially through Siiqee i.e. symbolizing a socially sanctioned set of rights exercised by Oromo women or a stick signifying the honor of Oromo women. When Oromo men pass from one stage to the next, their role in society changes as well. This is obviously seen at Luba or Gada stage which is the most important of the whole system. During such a period of 'government' the members of the class are called Gada (or Luba among some Oromo groups). The cyclical replacement of the class in power; a typical feature of the Gada government; is considered a rotation than control of political power and consequently, it is sometimes regarded as the basis for the Oromo or Gada democracy. (Baxer, Hultin and Triulzi, 1996, 152)

Following this route the concept of rule of law and morality or Saffu has become the core of Oromo social, economic, political, philosophical, and spiritual life of a holistic institution of Gada system. Both, rule of law and morality are important principles in the beliefs and practices of Oromo's indigenous politics. Therefore, they are inseparable for one cannot stand without the other.

Above all the very indigenous political leadership of Gada system gives a strong emphasis on the rule of law that guided typically by moral responsibility whenever there is a position of being a leader in contrast to lack of respect for rule of law. As leaders the class in power recognizes Saffu for rule of law as the basis upon which all human action should be founded and directs one on the right path. Through this moral and ethical order they show the way in which life can be

best lived by having a genuine respect for the rule of law. The political leaders believe in God's law and law of society that they establish through the Gada system of democracy and its rule of law to maintain *Nagaa* (peace) and Saffu among Waaqa, society and nature to achieve their full human destiny known as Kaayyoo. (Asafa, 1998, 12)

All in all moral responsibility within the Gada political system and the whole aspects of respect for rule of law in the same system are so needed to understand the moral and ethical laws of nature and society and to live accordingly. This is so obvious not only in the Gada political system but also in all African indigenous communities whereby moral responsibility and respect for the rule of law are indispensable from their indigenous political leadership.

The Role of Morality in African Indigenous Political Leadership as the Primary Solution to Current Lack of Respect for Rule of Law

This study attempts to unfold the real dimension of indigenous African political leadership and its moral responsibility in the light of philosophy. This will pave a clear way not only to demonstrate and to proof the existence of moral responsibility in indigenous African political leadership, but also to give an insight to the current African political leaders that their governance system clearly lacks these moral principles especially respect for the rule of law-without any doubt.

Therefore, the present African political leaders should recognize the role of morality in African indigenous political leadership as a solution to current lack of respect for the rule of law. This reality is clearer from the following sub-topics as we shall discuss the very concept of African indigenous political leadership where by respect for the rule of law and moral responsibility prevails. Above all this would become the clearest idea or concept from the light of moral responsibility in a *Gada Political System* as it exemplify African indigenous political leadership as Prior Solution to Present political crisis or lack of respect for the rule of law.

How Moral Responsibility in a Gada System Exemplify African Indigenous Political Leadership as Prior Solution to Present political Crisis?

As we have seen the egalitarian political system of Gada Oromo in the very fact of its moral responsibility toward respect for the rule of law does typically exemplify how the indigenous African political leadership has a great respect for the very concept of rule of law in each society or nation.

Rather it is a true political leadership where by one finds a concrete moral responsibility toward its clan or nation in the light of respect for the rule of law- from start to finish. This moral responsibility for the rule of law manifests itself more both in the actions of the leaders and individual person. Every action that goes against the rule of law especially that prevents the fulfillment of the common good and individual life is considered as an evil. This has a strong impact on the unity of the leaders and individual person in understanding the value of- rule of law, in which they complement each other and also self realization pervades or noticeable.

Having Gada Oromo political leaders in mind it is logical to quote Magesa' concept of African indigenous political leadership where it reads that "the most important obligation of every leader

is to do whatever is in his/her power to protect and prolong the life of the clan community according to the order established by the ancestors and transmitted by tradition." (Magessa, 2002 82)

This typically shows that there are respect for every order in the society and moral responsibility-in African Indigenous political Leadership where by ethical conduct is based not only on the individual person but also on the social, economical and political life of organized community that have a relational network. Every chief or leader who holds power understands that authority is meant for reconciliation, unity, justice, service honour to God and the ancestors than taking the transmission of tradition for granted and practicing abusive power. In this way the life of the clan or nation and their happiness might be assured.

Above all, the very fact of respect for rule of law in Gada political system does exemplify the African Indigenous Political Leadership as Prior Solution to present political crisis where by all those political malaises have been resulted due to the negligence of moral responsibility in the current African political leadership. The present African political leaders also failed to foresee that the chiefs or leaders who hold power in indigenous African political leadership understand that authority is meant for reconciliation, unity, justice, service honour to God and the ancestors than taking the transmission of indigenous political values for granted and practicing abusive of power. In African indigenous political leadership the understanding of moral responsibility is due to "the life strength, coming from God that gets new vitality not only from above but also in the way that all the members reinforce one another, to circulate in waves through the whole "body" i.e. the clan community."(Bujo, 1998, 27)

Where the present political leaders fail to understand this fact, there is no way to have respect for the rule of law, concerns for the weaker and disadvantaged of their members whereby concrete moral responsibility would be neglected. Therefore, the African Indigenous Political Leadership reminds every individual of its clan or nation to make his/her social and political contribution for the common good.

If such a moral responsibility for the rule of law is found in African Indigenous Political Leadership, it is meaningless for the current political leaders in Africa to import western style of governance or democracy to African societies that neither bring solutions to current African political crises nor promote unity and self identity among African societies. David G. Maillu argues that "democracy is nothing more than being sensitive and responsible for the other people's well being. Democracy is fully realized in loving your neighbour the way you love yourself. If so then democracy cannot be a new thing in Africa."(Mailu, 1997, 94) Even in African society where elders act as chiefs or leaders there is no monopoly in democratic rights for the mass. Never the less, they are one group among the large participation.

True democracy can be achieved and understood solely within the paradigm of rule of law whereby each political leader and member of a society must recognize the same rule and abide by it. Still this recognition toward respect for the rule of law cannot bring a real solution for the current African political crises- unless political leaders recognize the role of morality in any political arena- especially toward the very rule of law.

The rules of laws that have been proposed in the constitutions for each African nation by virtue of the well being of a society never eradicate the present political turmoils -that those nations

have been facing since independence- unless the whole concept of the rule of law presupposes the role of morality in any political activities like that of indigenous political leadership where by those political leaders could perceive lack of respect for the rule of law as the violation of morality so that everybody refrain from such kind immoral actions lest they call a curse upon themselves. The conception of rule of law and the moral life of Oromo community, therefore, can be easily recognized in the light of *Gada political system,* as an exemplary character of true democracy guided by the rule of law than rule of man. This kind of polity plays an important role in the very life of a community to restore peace and avoid any political malaises. Above all it brings a great prosperity in the life of an individual that makes him/her so happier within a society through proper understanding of rule of law and its intimate relationship with morality where by the true notion of equality, justice, rights, authority, legitimacy, order, peace and any political understanding would become more understood and implemented.

The moral responsibility in Gada political system that manifests mostly itself in the rule of law is one of the ways through which African politics can only witness and experience peace and wholesomeness in her indigenous values against the current political crises. In the same way the present political turmoil cannot be eradicated without implementing those values in the arena of African politics. Therefore, it is absolutely meaningless to seek for solutions to present lack of respect for the rule of law- in present African political leadership- by virtue of democratic norms and value apart from recognition of the role of moral responsibility in African indigenous political leadership.

One of the most interesting types of pressure the institutions exert on each other is mediated by public sentiment and the character of the leaders. Character plays a role in this informal aspect of the system of mutual regulation, and it becomes apparent in the life and work of all the living Abba Gadas or the two Quallus who were, in recent decades, in positions of political military, judicial, legislative or ritual leadership.

Asmerom Legesse manifestes his personal contact with leaders and this is what he said,

> "Abba Gadas like Guyyo Boru (1944-52) and Gobba Bule (1968-76), were well known and highly respected mediators and adjudicators in their society and they continued, informally to serve their luba long after handing over power to their successors. Gobba Bule was a powerful, if somewhat impulsive, speaker. Guyyo Boru was the great peace maker: his home was a veritable magnet; his wisdom, humility, and extensive knowledge were such that he commanded the deepest respect of his people. He had a gentle, avuncular face, a soothing voice and an uncanny ability to pacify the most contentious litigants who came before hi. His reputation probably created changes in public opinion that helped to bring about the shift in power away from the litigious Warra Qallu (moiety leaders) to the more astute Warra Bokku (gada leaders)." (Asmarom, 2006, 113)

For a variety of reasons of which character, ethics and competence are the most important leaders may either exceed or fall short of their mandate in the way they exercise their authority. When that happens, Oromo society has methods of controlling the damage.

A most important political function of the Gumi is the authority to review the activities of the Gada class in power and to decide whether the leaders are fit to complete their term of office,

and continue to lead the Gada class and the nation for the rest of is active career. Their work can be evaluated on rational-legal grounds.

There is nothing hypothetical about the power of the national assembly in this regard. They have the right to impeach Gada leaders and have done so on several occasions in the last three centuries (1700-present). A political leader can be removed when the rational legal method of impeachment has failed, or is deemed to be less likely to succeed. In my opinion these type of institutions and structures are lucking in the modern Africa and that is why the current African political leaders behaving the way they are behaving.

CONCLUSION

As we have come to the conclusion of this paper, I would like to quote the philosophical words of Jan Vansina, Raymond Mauny and L. V. Thomas that typically unfold why this study meant for and conclude the problem and objective we need to address

> "Every self-conscious nation looks back upon its past to revive former glories, to discover its origin, to relate its history to that of other parts of the world and to arrive at knowledge of the development of its political, social, economic and other systems." (Bill, 1998, 4)

Our development efforts and strategies need to be inspired and informed by our collective cultural heritage. We have to know who we are, before we know what we can become. There is no way that people who are alienated from themselves can ever rise above the level they are. It is in knowing ones past, one's culture that one can appreciate where he stands, and transcend his given situation in order to become what he can become. The basis of leadership and change is to have a very high sense of personal history and personal heritage.

The only true way out of the largely misunderstood and misapplied foreign ideologies is to decolonize our Afrocentric cultural heritage, and authentically live side by side with the cultural imperialists. Afrocentric cultural renaissance is a process of injecting African value systems, concepts and ethics into all our human activities.

Therefore, as we have try to discuss the current political crisis in African continent cannot be eradicated and African countries themselves will continue to be racked by conflicts unless each nation looks back upon its past to revive former glories of its self- conscious nation- in respecting the rule of law. Also we have been attempted to portray the role of philosophy in making the present African political leadership to adapt indigenous political realities that would shape an indigenous African socio-cultural tradition, to pave the way toward respect for the rule of law in the context of moral responsibility.

In the past African indigenous political leadership and its system functioned well due to the fulfilment felt needs in societies. Thus, one can argue that the lack of respect for the rule of law in African continent (can be) due to western ideologies about democracy that specifically rooted

in the notion of political and social rights for individuals than admitting African communal philosophy whereby respect for African cultures and languages have been neglected and those foreign ideologies have been applied without any question. The consequence has been also the violation of the rule of law among African nations and the isolation of politics from morality as we have tried to discuss.

Therefore, different African societies necessitated types of philosophical governance based on indigenous political leadership like in the case of Gada political system. The failure of modern political leaders to compromise with the philosophy of indigenous political leadership- that cannot be isolate itself from morality- has been led the continent into political malaise especially in violating the rule of law. Each African nation should be free to choose or develop forms of governance in keeping with their local realities. That is why Owusu argues that

> African democracy may require the integration of indigenous methods of village-cooperation with innovative forms of government, combining the power of universal rights with the uniqueness of each district's or nations own customs and respected traditions. (Owusu, 1991, 384)

All in all any solution for present African political crises presupposes indigenous political philosophy which has a historical continuity with pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, and needs to preserve, develop, and transmit to future African generations as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural pattern, social institutions, and legal systems.

To this end, we invite universities, and indeed all tertiary institutions to stand out and be counted as intellectual clinics for the decolonization of the mind, the transmission of African culture and values, to affect the African cultural renaissance. We have a key role to play in generating ideas needed to take our continent to a new level of political leadership. The true search for an African identity, the recognition of the environment in which that identity is sought, becomes a concept that enables us to conceptualize and articulate Africa as our motherland in order to affirm our being, personhood and nationhood.

Finally, there will never be any political leadership system in Africa without a cultural renaissance. Any transformation needs a new awareness and a new consciousness. For Africa, this lies in giving an opportunity to African Indigenous Leaders for efficient service delivery in the current political leadership in Africa.

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