

Donna Pido. (2017)"Beyond Liberal Democracy: The Quest for Indigenous African Models of Democracy for the Twenty-First Century" *Democracy as Falsehood: Seek but do Not Expect to Find*. In press with CRVP in its publication series Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change. Organized by Council for Research in Philosophy and Values and the University of Nairobi May 22nd -23rd, 2017. * *Department of Design and Creative Media*

Abstract:

Philosophers have wonderful, well thought out ideas about democracy that stimulate thought and discourse. Anthropologists have slightly different points of view expressed in the changing historical trends in Anthropological theory. Bringing together the four classical subfields of anthropology: linguistics, archaeology, biological and cultural anthropology, this paper is based on an adult lifetime of extensive field research and personal observation in East Africa along with as little reading as a scholar can get away with. Beginning with the terminology attached to the concept of 'democracy' the author touches on ancient history and material remains-based evidence of democracy. The disruptive forces of colonialism, arrogance and waning Western hegemony have contributed to contemporary East African efforts to stabilize culture and governance in democratic ways thorough rhetoric and popular discourse. Moving on to our biological heritage and the behaviours that all of us humans share with our nearest primate relatives, the similarities and differences offer us some lessons in how we humans think about how we organize ourselves and participate in governance. Professional work and structured anthropological field work in all Districts/Counties of Kenya except Mandera have informed and provided insights. Of particular importance is the 25 years of observation and interaction with artificially constituted primate troops of white American university students studying in Kenya. This paper's statement/argument, ultimately coloured by feminist commitment, culminates in a cynical but optimistic cross-cultural critique of 'democracy' and efforts to operationalize the concept in reality.