



## **The Universality of Democracy in Economic and Cultural Context\***

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### **Abstract**

Democracy and universality are serious issues that concern everyone today and need to be studied. The question is whether democracy is universal or not remains up-to-date. Those who value democracy say that democracy is universal, while those who do not value democracy say that democracy is not universal. The research method used in this study uses a qualitative method with an empirical normative approach. The results suggest that the relationship between democracy and universality remains uncertain. This uncertainty has spread to the legal, cultural and economic fields. Any subject interested in democracy examines the concept from a hermeneutic and relativist perspective, starting from their own value judgments, and by focusing on the positive and negative aspects of the concept. This further leads to the formation of different tendencies regarding the universality of democracy. This raises the need for a re-evaluation of the concept.

**Keywords:** Universal; Democracy; Law; Culture; Economy

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## Universalitas Demokrasi dalam Konteks Ekonomi dan Budaya

### Abstrak

Demokrasi dan universalitas merupakan isu serius yang menjadi perhatian semua orang saat ini dan perlu dikaji. Pertanyaannya adalah apakah demokrasi itu universal atau tidak tetap up-to-date. Mereka yang menghargai demokrasi mengatakan bahwa demokrasi itu universal, sedangkan mereka yang tidak menghargai demokrasi menyatakan bahwa demokrasi tidak universal. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan normatif empiris. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa hubungan antara demokrasi dan universalitas tetap tidak pasti. Ketidakpastian ini telah menyebar ke bidang hukum, budaya dan ekonomi. Setiap mata pelajaran yang tertarik dengan demokrasi mengkaji konsep dari hermeneutik dan relativis perspektif, mulai dari penilaian nilai mereka sendiri, dan dengan berfokus pada aspek positif dan negatif dari konsep tersebut. Selanjutnya mengarah pada pembentukan kecenderungan yang berbeda tentang universalitas demokrasi. Hal ini menimbulkan perlunya evaluasi ulang konsep.

**Kata Kunci:** Universal; Demokrasi; Hukum; Budaya; Ekonomi

## Универсальность Демократии в Экономическом и Культурном Контексте

### Аннотация

Демократия и универсальность — это серьезные вопросы, которые волнуют сегодня всех и нуждаются в изучении. Вопрос о том, универсальна ли демократия или нет, остается актуальным. Те, кто ценит демократию, говорят, что демократия универсальна, а те, кто не ценит демократию, говорят, что демократия не универсальна. Метод исследования, использованный в данном исследовании, представляет собой качественный метод с эмпирическим нормативным подходом. Результаты показывают, что связь между демократией и универсальностью остается неопределенной. Эта неопределенность распространилась на правовую, культурную и экономическую сферы. Любой субъект, интересующийся демократией, исследует концепцию с герменевтической и релятивистской точки зрения, исходя из своих собственных оценочных суждений и сосредоточив внимание на положительных и отрицательных аспектах концепции. Это в дальнейшем приводит к формированию различных тенденций относительно универсальности демократии. В связи с этим возникает необходимость переоценки концепции.

**Ключевые слова:** Универсальный; Демократия; Закон; Культура; Экономика

## A. INTRODUCTION

The word universal has three different meanings. Accordingly, universality means, firstly, about the universe, secondly, concerning all humanity, universal, cosmic, and thirdly, worldwide. However, what conditions must be met for something to be a universal value? Does everyone's consent and acceptance in matters that concern all humanity make something a universal value? One thing that everyone agrees on is that there is no such thing as a universal value. Indeed, there is no universally accepted value. Given that every head contains a voice, there is nothing that no one disagrees to. It is impossible to speak of the universality of anything that everyone will consent to or accept in this circumstance. If enough people discover a reason to value something, it can be considered to be universal ([Sen, A. 2003: 12](#)). Rather than everyone's consent as a manifestation of universality, people are required to accept something as valuable in all situations ([Diamond, L. 2016: 256](#)).

The term universality is a concept that has been used frequently in every discipline from philosophy to science, from art to economics for the last 150 years. But the problem of universality has been going on since the early periods of the history of philosophy. There is no consensus on the definition of universality. The concept has led to conflicts, schisms and polarizations from past to present. The disagreements involved have been between essentialism-nominalism and universalism-singularism approaches. While the essentialist and universalist approach argues that a concept or object can have universality, according to the singular and nominalist approach, there is no concept or object that will have a universal nature ([Özlem, D. 2015: 11-24](#)). The incompatibility between these approaches only exists in disciplines such as law, politics, philosophy, etc.

The concept of democracy, the first traces of which we came across two thousand and five hundred years ago, is a concept that we, the "zoon political", have been discussing since the moment it entered our lives, but could not meet in a collective definition or even an explanation. The differences in the culture, political processes, social life dynamics and economic developments of thinkers, politicians or all subjects interested in democracy cause the concept to be examined in a hermeneutic and relativist perspective and open the definition and universality of the concept to discussion. The fact that the concept of democracy has very different definitions in public and in academia causes it to be exposed to erosion of meaning and inflation of interpretation ([Aktan, 2019: 4](#)). As a matter of fact, there are many different models of democracy and the emphasis differs. A democracy can be militaristic or pacifist, absolutist or

liberal, centralized or decentralized, progressive or reactionary, process-oriented or results-oriented ([Schmitt, 2014: 41](#)). Emphasis on democracy models also varies. For example, one model may emphasize equality, another may emphasize freedom, and another may emphasize not censoring elections or opposition. Although the understanding of democracy and emphasis are different, the common feature is that the source of sovereignty is the people in almost all of them, the power is elected by the people and the power is used in line with the will of the people ([Can, M. 2019: 2161](#)). However, in its most general definition, democracy refers to the rule of the people by the people, in other words, the sovereignty belongs to the people directly, semi-directly or through representation. Another general definition is an understanding in which the principle of "pluralism" is dominant.

The processes that took place years after the ancient Greek democracy witnessed the absolute and unlimited power of one person in the administration. The struggles against the unlimited and absolute power of a single person have led societies to new searches. Absolute domination left its place to the feudal system, and the bourgeoisie emerged with the development of trade and crafts. With the development of the bourgeoisie, the working class was born. As a result of protracted conflicts between the centralized kingdoms, the bourgeoisie and the working class, the monarchies were severely damaged and their powers were limited. The limitation of the monarch's powers could not end the conflicts and caused the transition to parliamentary periods by overthrowing the monarchies. Thus, the classical western democracy, which gained a universal character years after the ancient Greek democracy, emerged ([Gözler, 2006: 115,116](#)). Another issue in the emergence of classical western democracy is that it is an undeniable reality that people who are tired of traditions, dogmas and limitations of the mind have turned their way to rational thoughts.

## B. METHODS

In this study, qualitative research methods were used in the context of Islamic, Confucian and economic law. In the research, firstly, the relationship between democracy and universality was investigated and different views on whether democracy was universal or not were examined based on the definition of universality ([Setiawan, 2016](#)). Secondly, cultural debates are discussed and different approaches attributed to the question of whether Islamic and Confucian law are compatible with democratic values are explored. In the last section, economic developments are discussed, and those who claim

that there is a correlation between democracy and economic development and approaches that think the opposite are emphasized.

The study was conducted in Turkey. A literature review was conducted on the subject. Articles, journals, archives, documents and other materials supporting the subject were examined. As a result of the examination, inductive findings were obtained by reading and quoting. The findings were obtained as a result of the examination of secondary sources.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Relationship Between Democracy and Universality

Democracy, which is identified with the West and discussed with its supporters and opponents in a universal nature, declared its victory against all other regimes in part of the nineteenth century, throughout the twentieth century and in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. As a matter of fact, many states, especially Europe and the USA, could not resist the advancement of democratic thought and institutions. Even in places where there are strong monarchies, reactions have started to occur in the face of actions that can be considered as anti-democratic. As a matter of fact, the concept of progress and democracy has been seen as synonymous. The attitudes of those who are against democracy have been seen by the pro-democracy as a futile defense and defenders of the obsolete. Such specific perspectives have become the occasion for subjects to invent various myths in the name of democracy against the objects of states. These inventions generally developed in favor of democracy. Although Ranke defined popular sovereignty as a strong idea and saw the struggle of this idea with monarchy as a dominant trend, all struggles between monarchy and democracy, absolute power and limited power, universal suffrage and limited suffrage resulted in democracy ([Schmitt, 2014: 37](#)).

Democracy is divided between those who accept it as a universal value and those who do not. The universal acceptance of democracy is essentially new and not very old. Democracy gained universal acceptance in the twentieth century. Indeed, in the twentieth century, democracy has been accepted as a normal model of government by all nations in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. Democratic developments such as the Magna Carta signed before the twentieth century, the American and French revolutions were limited to both sides of the North Atlantic, and democracy was founded on the economic, social and political history specific to these regions ([Sen, A. 2003: 6](#)). However, especially in the twentieth century, even countries that were not governed by

democracy and could not build democratic regimes described many of their actions as democratic ([Giddens, A. 2000:84](#)).

Those who see democracy as having a universal nature (who advocate the essentialist-universalist approach) emphasize its main constructive virtues. As a matter of fact, while emphasizing the universality of a value, various perspectives are preferred rather than a single concrete feature of it. First of all, human life and human life in democracies have importance in democracies. Secondly, democracy has an instrumental aspect in the formation of political demands. Third, democracy has constructive functions in the formation of values, in understanding the possibility and power of claims for duties, rights and needs. These virtues are not considered regional and local virtues, but are adopted by almost all countries in the universe ([Sen, A. 2003: 16](#)). Values such as equal political participation, political representation, pluralism, equality, freedom, effective control of the citizen, security of fundamental rights and belief in the rule of law are other features that make democracy universal.

The identification of democracy with the concept of “the people” and attaching great importance to the people cause those who declare that democracy is universal in nature to apply repeatedly. As a matter of fact, in democracies, the power belongs to the people and there is no legitimacy for a government that does not have the people in its denominator. Power comes from the will of the people. In democracies, citizens are not in the service of the state, the state is in the service of the citizens. The people are not for the government, the government is for the people. In democracies, the government is elected by the people and is under the control of the people ([Sartori, G. 1996: 36](#)). In democracies, if the people understand that the actions of the government they have given the authority to rule are not in line with their own wishes and demands, think that their will is not reflected and see the abuse of their sovereignty, they have the power to change the ruling power with their vote, which is the biggest trump card in their hands.

In contemporary democracies, the existence of a general, free and equal election right, competition between parties, healthy information for all citizens, freedom of thought, opposition and coalition, and the existence of an order in which the governed come and go by election, thanks to the existence of universal suffrage, make democracy more attractive against other forms of government. When the concept of democracy is examined in terms of political philosophy, it is striking that there are different approaches. In addition to the liberal political philosophy, which attaches more value to the idea of freedom and states that it is necessary to limit equality only in legal terms, there is also a

socialist political philosophy, which attaches more value to economic equality and defines freedom as the largest increase in the rights that are jointly owned, in addition to legal equality ([Demir, N. 2010: 600](#)). These two ideas, which have divided the world into two poles until recently, are important in terms of reflecting general trends and being at the focal point of discussions from academia to daily life.

Those who could not find enough justification to make democracy a universal value (advocating the nominal-singular approach) criticized democracy by referring to its paradoxical tendencies. Criticisms have generally been on concepts such as pluralism, majority vote, and ignoring the minority, and the universality of democracy has become controversial even by the most ardent democracy advocates.

In a democracy, the people means everyone who is considered equal to each other and consists of individual individuals. Where everyone lives, there is a minority as well as a majority. As a matter of fact, it is an undeniable fact that the minority is a sociological entity in society. The wishes of the minority as well as the majority are legitimate. However, democracy gives the right to rule to the majority. In this context, the decisions taken by the majority also affect the minorities and in most cases the minority is ignored. Looking at the matter superficially, democracy is nothing but a system where the many rule the few ([Eser, H. B. Taylan, Ö. 2016: 292](#)). With the concept of general will in which there is a majority in democracy, the people are compelled to consent to things they do not consent to ([Schmitt, 2014: 41](#)). Having a majority instead of unanimity also opens the way for the risk of ignoring minorities. This risk is more likely to occur where there are multi-party democracies. In binary party systems, the principle of "today's minority, tomorrow's majority, tomorrow's majority, today's minority" reduces risk, but does not completely eliminate it.

The concept of the elite, which is one of the most important subjects of political science and usually at the end of political science books, also gives a clue about the functional impossibility of the universality of democracy. While a certain part of the societies take the responsibility of governing, those who cannot obtain this responsibility are also condemned to be governed. In this context, elite theory generally means that the minority rules the majority. Another meaning is the domination of the minority. Democracies are the best desired form of government. Democracies are regimes that require effort to be achieved. Democracies are regimes that need to be developed if they are achieved. But these propositions can only benefit the governed. As a matter of fact, they can serve as myths that help mask the fact of domination and ensure

the obedience of those who are under domination. However, it should not be forgotten that no matter how dense the myths are, the fact that the minorities always rule and the majority is always ruled does not change. In this context, the rule of minorities cannot be characterized as democracy. The practices of democracy are the embodiment of minority domination. Minority domination increases inequalities in political resources, strategic positions and bargaining advantages, restricts freedom, and disregards justice ([Dahl, 1996: 338](#)).

Democracy evokes positive connotations in almost everyone's minds. Even autocratic countries seek to reap the benefits of democracy. In everyone's mind, there are negative, internalized pressures that will react negatively to formations against democracy. Political leaders gain the greatest supplies through democracy. However, practitioners and planners who constantly emphasize democracy have made the concept of democracy an operator by isolating the problems of public life from politics. They create hatred of democracy by doubling down on tolerance and conciliatory confusion and cause the universality of democracy to be questioned. Democracy is becoming compatible with the global economy and the oligarchy of the owners of foreign capital. The said harmony is transformed into domination thanks to individuals who internalize democracy. Domination, on the other hand, increases the inequality between those who have the monopoly of coercion and those who do not. The increase in inequalities is eliminated by emphasizing the equality of conditions ([Ranciere, 2014: 100](#)). Thus, democracy is the regime of the elite rather than the people. The power of elites is nothing but the modernization of oligarchic rule. In this context, the decisions taken in democracy only bind the areas. The obligation to bind those who oppose the decisions taken is a kind of imposition that is incompatible with the criteria of democracy itself. In this case, there is a clear theoretical and empirical disregard for the minority. Democracy supporters try to cover up these ignorances by arguing that the will of the minority is identical with the will of the majority. The ideas that form the basis for the democratic system of thought correspond to an old tradition seen in Rousseau and Locke. According to this tradition, in a democracy, the citizen consents to laws that go against her will because the law expresses the general will. Thus, the citizen never consents to the concrete content. It only consents to the general will that emerges as a result of voting and votes only because the general will can be understood as a result of the collection of votes. If the result is the opinion of the majority, the minority will be mistaken about the content of the general will. Because the general will corresponds to real freedom, those who remain in the minority correspond to the class of the unfree. Jacobin logic uses democracy to justify the rule of the minority over the majority. In this way,

the law and the will of the people never appear as the absolute allied will of all citizens ([Schmitt, 2014: 41](#)).

## 2. Cultural Discussions

The cultures of Islam and Confucianism underlie cultural debates. Discussions in question progress on the axis of whether the cultures of Islam and Confucianism are compatible in terms of democracy. The existence of various tendencies in cultural debates draws attention. As a matter of fact, considering the different dynamics of both cultures, positive and negative comments were made about its relationship with democracy. Moreover, the dough of these various interpretations has been kneaded by the hands of thinkers of different views who belong to the religions in question and who are not.

One of the main arguments of those who say that democracy is incompatible with Islamic and Confucian cultures is that democracy first emerged in Western societies that adopted the Christian religion ([Huntington, 2002: 293](#)). After democracy emerged in the West, it was again modernized by the Western society and tried to be brought into the most ideal form. Islamic and Confucian cultures built democracy much later than the West, but these cultures failed to establish a pure democracy. Islam and Confucian cultures have had either no or limited exposure to democracy. Those who say that democracy is unique to Christian societies also give empirical examples by looking at the practices of the countries of the world. All of the democratic countries determined according to certain criteria have been countries where Christian societies live.<sup>3</sup>

### a). Democracy in Islamic Law

Modern law is divided into two as public and private law. But there is no such distinction in Islamic Law. Islamic law classified legal and non-legal issues such as debts and real rights, family law, inheritance law, criminal law, moral issues by dividing them into books in the same category. State and form of government are not specified in Islamic law. There are only the basics of administration. The state and the form of government are left to customs, traditions and jurisprudence ([Aydm, H. 2001: 9-11](#)). The fact that the state and

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed information about the state of the democracies of the countries, see. "Freedom House" (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2021/global-drive-control-big-tech>) See also "Global State Of Democracy" (<https://www.idea.int/gsod/global-report>)

the form of government are not specified in Islamic law leads to debate whether Islam is compatible with democratic values.

The nature of the discussions between Islam and democracy has increased decisively in recent years. The debates became more intense with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, when the Western world placed Islamic culture and Muslims instead of communism as the other. These discussions are generally carried out on two levels. The first is whether it doctrinally agrees with the normative point of view, and the second is whether it coexists empirically. As a result of the discussions, two conclusions are reached. The first is the view stating that Islam cannot coexist with democracy and is incompatible, and the other is the view stating that Islam can coexist with democracy and is compatible ([Bozbaş, G. 2017: 138](#)).

The main theses of those who claim that Islam does not correspond to democracy are that Islam is a unique state model. In this state model, although some features show parallelism with democracy, they differ from each other at the final point. The most basic concept in the discussion is the element of "dominance". In Islamic culture, the authority to dominate and legislate belonged to one and only one authority. That authority is Allah. In democracies, the dominance is in the people, but the authority to make laws is the representatives elected by the people. The fact that the domination and the law are in the people makes them a kind of shirk. From this perspective, democracy is not Allah's judgment ([Koyuncu, A. A. 2015: 712](#)). Along with sovereignty, majority is a concept used by those who argue that Islam is incompatible with democracy. As a matter of fact, many verses in the Qur'an indicate that people can go astray if the majority is followed ([Ateş, H. 2017: 216](#)).

Those who argue that Islamic culture is compatible with democracy draw attention to the shura, ijihad and ijma systems that exist in the Islamic political tradition. An Arabic word shura is also used in Turkish and means to consult and discuss. It is associated with democratic values for people to come together, discuss, express their ideas and benefit from each other's experiences on any occasion in order to make the most correct and appropriate decisions ([Bozbaş, G. 2017: 140](#)). The second concept, ijihad, means to use all one's strength, to make an effort and to be persistent. It is used in the hadiths to mean that the judges and administrators make their best efforts to reach the right decision. Ijtihad is taking action by taking the verses as a guide in order to find solutions to the problems encountered. In this context, ijihad activates Islam by preventing it from pacifying in the face of new situations. Those who say that

Islamic culture is compatible with democracy argue that Allah has made general provisions regarding politics and administration and has given people the freedom to practice according to the principles and rules of every age. The third and last concept, ijma, enabled the adoption of systems that accept majority rule ([Koyuncu, A. A. 2015: 716](#)).

#### **b). Democracy in Confucian law**

Confucius' law, politics, social, moral, education, history, literature teachings are included in the book Lunyu. Lunyu was written by Confucius. The book provides information on Confucian law, her worldview and philosophy of life ([Kalkır, N. 2018: 101](#)). While examining the relationship between Confucianism and democracy, the work called Lunyu is used.

Just as with Islamic law, there is no consensus on whether Confucian law is compatible with democracy. As a matter of fact, there are different tendencies that say that Confucianism is compatible with democracy and democratic values or not. In Confucian societies, keeping harmony and cooperation superior to conflict and competition, not giving legitimacy to autonomous social institutions that can balance the state, unlimited and unbridled actions of power since power and morality are considered as one, are the features of Confucianism that are incompatible with democracy. Other features of Confucianism that are incompatible with democracy are that individual rights against the state are only created by the state, loyalty to the maintenance of order, and excessive respect for hierarchy ([Huntington, S. 2002: 295](#)). Those who argue that Confucian cultures are compatible with democracy have referred to Confucian ideals. During the time period of Confucius (551-479 BC), the suffering of the people and the absence of any mechanism to produce a solution were effective in the formation of her ideal government. According to her, the most ideal government is the government that has won the trust of the people. Defending that the rulers should be in solidarity and agreement with their people, and stating that the rulers should make efforts for the people to lead a prosperous life, made Confucius' thoughts compatible with modern democracy ([Güç, A. 2001: 45](#)).

### **3. Economic Developments**

We have stated that in order for something to be universal, people must attach value regardless of the conditions and situations, rather than the consent of everyone. Those who value democracy emphasize the positive relations between economic developments and democracy in order to prove that

democracy is universal. It is mentioned that the economy is strong and there is a strong middle class in regions where democracy and democratic institutions are developed. While this is true, the abundance of non-democratic countries with high economic indicators shows the falsification of this thesis. Antidemocratic countries with strong economies are shown as examples by those who do not value democracy enough to see it as universal, and democracy is not seen as an indispensable form of government for economic development.

The relationship between economic developments and democracy has multidimensional aspects. The relationship between the two is dynamic and changes according to the time and place it is in ([Huntington, 2002: 56](#)). No single economic indicator helps to understand whether democracy is universal or not. Economic indicators allow individuals to be evaluated in a relativist framework according to their value judgments and perspectives on democracy. While there are those who claim that there is a correlation between democracy and economic developments, there are also those who claim that the two can be independent of each other and that one can happen without the other. According to the first view, there are plausible reasons between democracy and economic development. As a matter of fact, 42 of 48 countries with a high level of human development are governed by democracy. The fact that almost all of the high-development countries are governed by democracy strengthens the link between democracy and economic development. There are various studies showing that democracy positively affects the development of countries through different channels. According to these studies, stable growth, being attractive for investments, and adjusting the production and consumption balance affect the economy positively. Other positive effects of the economy on democracies are the high capacity of democratic institutions to cope with economic crises, the reflection of the crisis by minimizing any damage, and the creation of an environment of trust by placing the law above all else ([Doğan, A. 2005: 4](#)). According to those who think that economic developments will have positive results for democracies, accountability in democratic governments suppresses the government to use resources more effectively and efficiently, and affects economic performance positively. The fact that there are elections in democratic systems moves the ruling elites with the motive of applying more rational economic policies to ensure the continuation of their power ([Barış, S. Erdoğan, M. 2018: 86](#)).

Democracy aids economic growth with transparency and accountability that reins in the executive and makes it accountable. While these concepts punish undesired state interventions in the economy, they also reward desired

interventions. Democracies make very important contributions to the formation of social infrastructure systems such as encouraging human and non-human capital, guaranteeing property rights, and ensuring the formation of free trade ([Sırım, V. Eraslan, M. 2020: 124](#)) and helps economic indicators to develop upwards.

According to the second view, there is no correlation between democracy and economy. According to this view, democratic governments do not encourage economic development, and economic developments gain more momentum in autocratic countries. East Asian countries such as Singapore, China, South Korea, Taiwan stand out as fast-growing economies even though they cannot internalize democracy. Singapore's founding leader, Lee Kuan Yew, stated that soft authoritarian rule is the most important factor in Singapore's development ([Sırım, V. Eraslan, M. 2020: 125](#)) pointing out that there is a paradox between economic developments and democracy.

Those who do not attribute positive values to democracy believe that there is a correlation between economic growth and autocratic regimes. According to them, unions and the poor exert pressure for current consumption in democratic countries, and the power of pressure to reduce investments negatively affects the economy. Autocratic regimes, on the other hand, develop the economy because they have the power to limit all kinds of oppression. In this context, autocratic regimes can make more effective and efficient investments and find a wider range of action since there is no lobbying activity ([Doğan, A. 2005: 6](#)). Democracies cause a decrease in investments because they cause rapid consumption. However, where autocratic governments are active, current consumption falls comfortably and savings increase ([Barış, S. Erdoğan, M. 2018: 89](#)).

Contrary to the universal view of democracy seeing the suffrage as a value, those who do not view democracy universally do not see the suffrage as a value because it has the potential to undermine economic development. Individuals with the right to vote demand short-term and daily consumption expenditures that they will be satisfied with from the government. Therefore, they tend to choose parties that provide cash and welfare benefits for them. This causes the resources to be transferred to individual individuals rather than the society, and the society to become agglomerated. Likewise, workers who want to benefit from the blessings of democracy will demand high wages with rights such as strikes and unions, and if their demands are not met, they have the opportunity to withdraw from the production network. In such a situation, private investments decrease with the decrease in production. Elites, who do

not want to lose power, prefer short and ineffective expenditures instead of long-term investments and destabilize the economy ([Sirim, V. Eraslan, M. 2020: 125](#)).

#### D. CONCLUSION

The concept of democracy has never lost its dynamism since its emergence and has been constantly discussed with its supporters and opponents. The debates that took place in many periods of history continue today. Moreover, it does not go unnoticed that the debates have recently gained violence. Debates proceed in a multidimensional way depending on the values attributed to democracy. One of them is whether democracy is universal or not. It appears as a concept that is accepted by everyone in the universal dictionary meaning, that concerns everyone and that everyone consents to. However, it is not possible to talk about the facts that everyone can accept or consent to, especially in politics. There is no political concept that everyone can agree on, and it is not possible to talk about a single definition in the explanation of the concepts. As a matter of fact, people have different value judgments and concepts are affected by people's value judgments. In this context, the concept of universality can be defined as the ability of people to find reasons to value something in all circumstances.

As a result of the research conducted, democracy is neither universal nor non-universal. Values attributed to democracy are different, positive and negative. The reason for the differences is that they are evaluated within the framework of essentialism-universalism and particularism-nominalism. Those who see democracy as universal emphasize its positive aspects. Concepts such as sovereignty belonging to the people, the value given to human beings, law, equality, freedom, pluralism, effective popular control are the concepts that those who see democracy as a universal concept apply and insist on. Those who do not see democracy as universal, on the other hand, emphasize its negative sides. Concepts such as minority, pluralism and majority vote are used by those who do not see democracy as a universal concept.

There are also various explanations of those who seek the issue of whether democracy is universal or not in Law. Whether Islamic and Confucian cultures are compatible with democracy is not an agreed-upon issue. There are those who say that both cultures are compatible with democracy, as well as those who say that democracy is a product of Western and therefore Christian culture. Islam's concepts ijthad, ijma and shura are associated with democracy. The view that sovereignty belongs only to Allah and that following the majority

can be harmful in some cases is not compatible with democracy. In Confucianism, the absence of competition, the absence of autonomous institutions, and the equating of power and morality are incompatible with democracy. However, Confucius's statement that the government and the people should be in reconciliation and solidarity, and that the government should gain the trust of the people, is associated with democracy.

As in cultural matters, it is not clear whether democracy is universal or not in economic matters. As a matter of fact, there are different trends in economic matters. More transparency and accountability of democratic governments and keeping the law above all contribute positively to the development of the economy. However, the existence of East Asian countries such as Singapore, China, Taiwan and South Korea, which are autocratic but show serious economic developments, indicate that the correlation between economic development and democracy has paradoxical tendencies.

When all these are evaluated, it is observed that both views cannot meet on a common denominator. In this case, as a solution, either the concept of universal should be redefined or a universally agreed definition of democracy should be worked on. Otherwise, whether democracy is universal or not will continue to exist as an undisclosed issue.

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