PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD: WHAT MEANS TO WHAT END?

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Abstract. *Debates over democracy and human rights have endlessly been engaged in by many countries with the aim of fostering a developmental model of a strong country. For democracy and human rights to rein on a global scale, a reliable citizen needs to be built. At this moment, every country will have the chance to negotiate its terms and get included among the democratic and developed nations of the world. In keeping with this philosophy, quite many noticeable incidents have come to occupy the headlines of news for the past three years. Some Arab countries have witnessed social movements aiming at changing things for better by replacing old political regimes by new democratic ones. In line with such social movements, many questions have come to the fore front as to whether democracy does really exist in the Arab world and whether or not replacing old regimes by new ones can bring about democratic social changes to the Arab world. In this respect, the present paper aims at raising these and other questions appertaining to the existence of democracy and human rights in the Arab world, especially after what has come to be termed as "the Arab spring".*

Keywords: *Democracy, Human Rights, Democratization, Arab World, Arab Spring.*

As a favourite topic always brought into play in private, public or political gatherings, the issue of democracy has occupied the attention of the public for centuries. Holding on to the belief that democracy would one day reign all over the world is the beacon of light towards which people, mainly the oppressed look with desiring as well as aspiring eyes. Quite noticeable, in the past three years, are the resurgent movements of many Arab people calling for drastic political reforms in their countries, aspiring for freedom from long-standing tyrannies and voicing their woes regarding the widening intensified disparities between the rich and the poor in their countries. People grew tired of the situation they

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have come, at a certain period of time, to recognize as an affliction, since large segments of humanity live in conditions of dire poverty, absence of democracy and obscene inequalities between two major camps: the haves and have-nots. The unexpected mass uprising in many Arab countries, such as Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria or Lybia, among others, has put into display the questions of democracy and human rights, and the extent to which their implementations in the Arab world is far from democratic.

In fact, the recent Arab movements, recognized and termed as the Arab spring, have brought into play a host of radical and exceptional social and political changes in many parts of the Arab world. These movements of the Arab spring calling for freedoms and democracy have brought about the toppling of long-established dictatorial regimes (the Egyptian and Tunisian presidents are a case in point). Yet, countries like Lybia and Syria, among others, have been brought to the threshold of a civil bloody war that has necessitated the intervention of western powers, whose concern is to secure their interests in these countries regarding oil reserves, among others.

In fact, the recent Arab movements of the Arab spring have urged new and instantaneous debates over the issues of democracy, freedom and human rights, to mention but the most prominent. Arabs and westerners alike have started to wonder about whether these values and rights are fully or even partly implemented in the Arab world. The successive overthrowing of many long-established dictatorial Arab regimes has raged a plethora of worries. People wonder if there really was such thing as an Arab democracy in the first place or all of those past years were a big lie and a characterization of an extensive conspiracy against the Arab mind. It is, therefore, by delving into these enquiries that this paper tries to foreground its foundational claim that the implementation of democracy in the Arab world is in fact far from democratic and valid.

It goes without saying that most people around the world aspire after having a decent life wherein they can enjoy basic rights – such as freedom, equality and respect among many others –, and hence perform their duties in relation to their nations as reliable citizens. In discussing the topic of human rights, several issues come to the limelight such as whether one should have and enjoy all the rights he / she can desire or suffice it to be contented with some rights and not others. Advocating human rights presupposes providing people or respecting their choices with regard to what rights they, most of all, desire to have. Basically, the right to be free is fundamental in human fates.

Therefore, nobody has to interfere with one's choices or decisions. The right to be free presupposes that one lives in a democratic setting where it is permitted to live a life of dignity, respect, happiness, equality or security, among many others. These are, certainly, basic human needs, with which people come to recognize their importance in relation to one another as well as to their nations. Nevertheless, things sometimes run counter to the human will, since human beings have not yet learnt how to coexist but look forward to controlling one another and maintaining tight grips on one another's personal life. Having such a situation explains the

gross violations of human rights by the powerful when claiming to maintain order and discipline either by coercive or tactful means.

In this sense, many are the calls issued by many Arab leaders with regard to promoting the basic human rights for their Arab citizens, and also frequent are the excuses provided by the same Arab leaders in masking their maltreatment of human rights and misuse of democracy. In support of this, Gouda Abdel-Khalek and Mustapha K. Al Sayyid (2011) argue that many Arab governments are solidly brought, "behind authoritarian leaders in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere in the Arab and Muslim world, despite the less than honourable record of respect for human rights by their leaders".

Frequently, what is being chanted as quixotic slogans of democracy and human rights by Arab politicians, country leaders or even organizations turn out, most of the time, to be a passing fad that quenches nothing but the thirst of particular moments. That is to say, promises are usually made in different speeches in an attempt to appease the anger of the oppressed people or give them hope for a better future. Once it is time to fulfil such promises, other excuses are brought into play in order to legitimize the different acts of human rights violation, the abuse of the basic principles of democracy and restrictions on individual as well as collective freedoms among many other transgressions. In this sense, Sarsar Saliba (2006) believes that promises of Arab politicians or leaders regarding the promotion of democracy and human rights remain unfulfilled. He, thus, argues that, while promising, events fell short of many democracy advocates' expectations. In Kuwait, for example, the national assembly blocked women from voting. National human rights organizations remain weak and too often act as tools with which governments suppress rather than promote human rights. Many Lebanese suspect the Syrian government to be behind a wave of assassinations of politicians and journalists[2].

Mindful of the myriad of mental divides that make it an impossibility for envisaging a "proper" Arab treatment of human rights and a spread of equality, democracy and freedom, there exist multiplicities of exigencies that obstruct the progress of human rights and democracy in the Arab world. In fact, autocracy in the Arab world has superseded democracy. Arabs find it hard to speak their mind and have a say on how they are governed without being censured or reproached. The rule of law and the equal administration of justice, which many politicians and rulers reference in their electoral speeches, seem to be a roundabout way of saying that the world has been living in a state of anarchy wherein law is taken hold of by the strong, thereby spreading out injustice. For this reason, it is now time for these leaders to have another chance to make things right and make sure that the rule of law and justice are restored and structurally being implemented.

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[1] Abdel-Khalek Gouda and Al Sayyid, K. Mustapha, 'Egypt: development, liberalization and the persistence of autocracy', in Ibrahim, Elbadawi, and Samir, Makdisi, (Editors), *Democracy in the Arab World. Explaining the Deficit*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 274.

[2] Saliba Sarsar, 'Quantifying Arab Democracy: Democracy in the Middle East', in the *Journal of Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2006, pp. 21-28.

Although promises may be of help sometimes, it is still be there a gloomy picture of democracy implementation in the Arab world that needs an unwavering volition to alter and not just big words which may never be fulfilled. In support of this, Sarsar Saliba (2006) writes that,

Arabs are stuck in autocracy and have far to go before any Arab country achieves democracy. The lack of progress over the past six years – especially at a time when democratization has become a primary goal of Western policy – suggests Arab rulers have shifted their rhetoric but not their policies. Democratization will take more than political promises. At its root, the failure of Arab societies to democratize rests in political exclusion and cultural attitudes and values[3].

Implied in Sarsar's (2006) wordings is the idea that there have always been continuous shifts in the Arab rulers' rhetoric on how to manipulate democracy for their political ends, while there has never been a real intention to change their policies. It seems that Arab rulers have not changed their policies towards implementing democracy, since things appear the same as they have always been: social injustice remains, inequality between men and women still rings high, freedom of speech is far from available and the rift between the rich and the poor is on a constant rise, to mention but a few cases. However, what keeps being transformed every now and then is the myriad number of promises that are spluttered here and there on the crowds to convince them that a new era of justice is upon them, and that they have to be part of the change that will soon usher in an era of political accountability, tranquillity, freedom, justice and progress for everyone. In point of fact, what Arab leaders and politicians, "share in common is the verbal desirability of these goals," Luis J. Cantori explains, "but the implementation and understanding of these concepts differ significantly".[4] In support of Louis J. Cantori's (2007) argumentation, Sarsar Saliba (2006) tries to lay bare the foundational ground for what a true democracy is. He therefore writes that.

Democracy is not just about fair, free, and frequent elections; it should also embody good governance, defined in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s Arab Human Development Report as "a set of societal institutions that fully represent the people, interlinked by a solid network of institutional regulation and accountability (with ultimate accountability to the people), whose purpose is to achieve the welfare of all members of society." Democratic societies must include freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of religion, and protections of basic human rights[5].

A survey on the level of democracy in the Arab world would certainly bring about results on the extent to which democracy is still lagging years behind before it reaches a mature status as practiced, to some extent, in some western democracies. "There is plenty of evidence that the political and civic rights record in Arab

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[3] Saliba Sarsar, 'Quantifying Arab Democracy: Democracy in the Middle East', in the *Journal of Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2006, pp. 21-28.
[4] Cantori, J. Louis, 'Islamic Republicanism and a Liberal Democracy', in Khalid, Hajji (Editor), *Islam and the West for a Better World*, Qatar, Arab Scientific Publishers, Inc., 2007, p. 66.
[5] Saliba Sarsar, 'Quantifying Arab Democracy: Democracy in the Middle East', in the *Journal of Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 13, No. 3, 2006, pp. 21-28.

countries has been marred by serious violations, attested to by various reports of Arab and international human rights organizations"[6]. The interference with election results (As the case of Egypt[7]) to the advantage of some groups is one such example making explicit a multiplicity of serious undemocratic violations committed in the name of human rights and democracy promotion. In their implicit war, so to speak, to take hold of the riches of their countries, some Arab rulers have subdued their people and denied them the basic human rights of choosing their rulers. The censorship posed on the Arab masses in voicing their worries and exposing their choices regarding their rulers has reduced them to a mortified life wherein their dignity and honour have been shamelessly disgraced. The denial of many rights to people has not come without its ensuing ramifications. International relations between Arab countries (take Egypt as a case in point) and the Western governments have been witnessing unstable ups and downs. In this sense, Gouda Abdel-Khalek and Mustapha K. Al Sayyid (2011) argue that,

Outside criticism of violations of human rights or lack of substantive democratic development in Egypt (e.g. heavy-handed interventions in the elections process) has usually been mild in nature and the Egyptian government has been able to live with it. Such criticism has rarely affected formal relations between the Egyptian government and Western governments. [As a result] Reduced foreign economic assistance to Egypt (e.g. Official Development Assistance) declined from an annual average of US$3.2 billion for 1990–9 to $926 million for 2005, while US economic aid dropped from $0.8 billion for 1998 to $348 million for 2005) was due to an intended pressure on the Egyptian government to undertake serious democratization measures[8].

If the truth to be told, such economic sanctions don't in fact matter as long as they remind the world that the Western world is a democracy that looks forward to having democracies spread all over the world. What is essential, though, is the idea behind these sanctions. The declaration that there are sanctions being posed on some Arab countries by the West proves that there is really a breaching of international laws regarding the application and respect of human rights in the Arab countries. This way, Arabs will continue to rely on the West to instruct them on how to be nice to each other and how to properly respect each others' choices; otherwise the Western powers will interfere so as to ground the transgressors of whatever slip they fall into.

In his full analysis of the Arab democracy, Sarsar Saliba (2006) has relied on a number of concerns (such as religious, political and economic freedoms and other human rights) to measure the state of democracy in seventeen Arab world between 1999 and 2005. Saliba's (2006) analysis of the state of democratization considers multiple variables. These consider the way political leaders are selected and the maturity of political rights and civil liberties, among others. He included

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[6] Elbadawi Ibrahim and Makdisi Samir, 'Introduction', in Ibrahim, Elbadawi, and Samir, Makdisi (Editors), *Democracy in the Arab World. Explaining the Deficit*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 6.
[7] Abdel-Khalek Gouda, Al Sayyid, K. Mustapha, 'Egypt: development, liberalization and the persistence of autocracy', in Ibrahim, Elbadawi, and Samir, Makdis (Editors), *Democracy in the Arab World. Explaining the Deficit*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 272.
[8] Abdel-Khalek Gouda and Al Sayyid, K. Mustapha, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen[9].

The results in the index of democracy in 1999 (as shown in Table 1) show that the Arab world is a region far from democratic. For example, the level of democracy in Morocco ranked high and is gauged as the highest among the other sixteen Arab countries. Morocco scored 11 points out of 18 or a 61 percent level. Jordan and Lebanon came second in ranking their democracy levels, since they both scored 10.5 points or 58 percent. The third highest scoring went to Tunisia with 10 points or 56 percent. On the other side of the coin, specifically the dark side of democracy levels, Iraq and Saudi Arabia scored the lowest rankings with 2.5 points or 14 percent. The following table (Table 1: Status of Democracy Index's Ranking of 17 Arab Countries, 1999) provides more evidence of the decrease in democracy levels in more other Arab countries.

Following the 1999 survey of democracy Levels in many Arab countries, it may be true that some Arab governments have been mobilized to make necessary political, economic or social amendments. However, another survey gauging democracy levels in the same seventeenth Arab countries conducted on 2005 shows that the Arab world is still authoritarian though some countries have made some reforms to alter the lowest rankings they have been compartmentalized into since the year 1999 regarding their index of democracy. In this sense, Sarsar Saliba (2006) brings into light some of the reforms made by some Arab countries between the year 1999 and 2005 to get ahead in their rankings of democracy levels. He thus states that,

In 1999, Kuwait's ruler Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah issued a decree granting women full political rights. Governments formed national human rights institutions in Jordan in 2000, and in both Qatar and Egypt three years later. In 2001, Bahraini citizens voted to transform the country from an emirate into a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament and an independent judiciary. In March 2003, a U.S.-led coalition ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. Jordanians voted for a new parliament that same year after King Abdullah II lifted his three-year suspension of the body. Saudi Arabia held its first municipal elections since the country's 1932 establishment. International pressure led to multiparty, albeit restricted, elections in Egypt. There were other elections in Iraq and Lebanon, the latter freed in May 2005 from a decades-long Syrian occupation[10].

The 2005 survey on the index of democracy in the Arab world, however, shows that there is no noticeable progress in the application or respect of democracy in the same seventeen Arab countries, on which a same survey was conducted on 1999. Although some Arab countries have tried to make some political, social or economic reforms, among others, statistics show the contrary (See Table 2). For instance, though Jordan and Lebanon kept their rankings and remained consistent with 10.5 points each or 58 percent, they have come ahead of Morocco, which was ranked as the first democracy in 1999.

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[9] Saliba Sarsar, 'Quantifying Arab Democracy: Democracy in the Middle East', in the *Journal of Middle East Quarterly*, vol. 13, No. 3, 2006, pp. 21-28.
[10] Saliba Sarsar, pp. 21-28.

Table 1
Status of Democracy Index's Ranking of 17 Arab Countries, 1999

Country	A Free Election Head of State	B Free Election Legislature/ National Council	C Political Parties	D Suffrage	E Media Freedom	F Religious Freedom	G Human Rights	H Human Development	I Economic Freedom	Total SDI	% SDI	Arab SDI Ranking
Algeria	1	2	1.5	2	0	1.5	0	1	1	9	50	5
Bahrain	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	28	11
Egypt	1	2	1	2	0	1.5	0	1	1.5	8	44	9
Iraq	0	1.5	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2.5	14	16
Jordan	0	2	1.5	2	0	1.5	1.5	1	2	10.5	58	2
Kuwait	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	2	2	9	50	5
Lebanon	1	2	1.5	0	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	10.5	58	2
Libya	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	28	11
Morocco	0	2	1.5	2	1	1	1.5	1	2	11	61	1
Oman	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	5	28	11
Qatar	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	2	1.5	5	28	11
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.5	2.5	14	16
Sudan	0	2	0	1.5	0	0	1.5	0	1.5	4.5	25	15
Syria	1	2	1	2	0	1	0	1	1.5	8.5	47	7
Tunisia	1	2	1.5	2	0	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	10	56	4
UAE	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	6	33	10
Yemen	1	2	1.5	2	0	1	1.5	0	1.5	8.5	47	7

Legend: **A:** 0=no; 1=indirect or not totally free; 2=yes; **B:** 0=no; 1=indirect or limited; 2=yes; **C:** 0=prohibited or nonexistent; 1=controlled by government or need government approval; 2=reasonably free; **D:** 0=none; 1=some; 2=free; **E:** 0=not free; 1=partly free; 2=free; **F:** 0=none; 1=some; 2=yes; **G:** 0=not observed; 1=partly observed; 2=fully observed; **H:** 0=low human development; 1=medium human development; 2=high human development; **I:** 0=strong governmental interference; 1=medium governmental interference; 2=low governmental interference

Source: "Arab Politics: Can Democracy Prevail?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Mar. 2000, p. 44.

Table 2

Status of Democracy Index's Ranking of 17 Arab Countries, 2005

Country	A Free Election Head of State	B Free Election Legislature/ National Council	C Political Parties	D Suffrage	E Media Freedom	F Religious Freedom	G Human Rights	H Human Development	I Economic Freedom	Total SDI	% SDI	Trend 2000 to 2006
Algeria	1.5	1.5	1	2	0	.5	.5	1	1	9	50	•
Bahrain	0	.5	0	.5	0	1	.5	2	2	6.5	36	▲
Egypt	1	1.5	1	2	0	1	.5	1	1	9	50	▲
Iraq	1	1	1	1	.5	.5	0	1 est.	1 est.	7	39	▲
Jordan	0	1.5	1.5	2	0	1.5	1	1	2	10.5	58	•
Kuwait	0	1	0	1	1	1	.5	2	2	8.5	47	▲
Lebanon	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1	1	10.5	58	•
Libya	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	28	•
Morocco	0	1.5	1.5	1.5	0	1	.5	1	1	8	44	▲
Oman	0	1	0	1	0	.5	.5	1	1	5	28	•
Qatar	0	.5	0	1	0	1	.5	2	1	6	33	▲
Saudi Arabia	0	.5	0	.5	0	0	0	1	2	4	22	▲
Sudan	0	1	.5	1.5	0	0	0	1	1 est.	5	28	▲
Syria	.5	1	.5	1.5	0	1	.5	1	1	7	39	▲
Tunisia	1	1.5	.5	2	0	1.5	.5	1	1	9	50	▲
UAE	0	.5	0	0	0	1	.5	2	2	6	33	•
Yemen	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	0	1	.5	0	1	9	50	▲

Legend: **A**: 0 = no; 1 = indirect or partially free; 2 = yes; **B**: 0 = no; 1= indirect or limited; 2 = yes; **C**: 0 = prohibited or nonexistent; 1 = controlled by government approval; 2 = reasonably free; **D**: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes; **E**: 0 = not free; 1 = partly free; 2 = free; **F**: 0 = none; 1 = some; 2 = yes; **G**: 0 = not observed; 1 = partly observed; 2 = fully observed; **H**: 0 = low human development; 1 = medium development; 2 = high human development; **I**: 0 = strong governmental interference; 1 = medium governmental interference; 2 = low governmental interference; ▲ = more democracy; ▲ = less democracy; • = no change in democracy.

Source: Sarsar, Saliba. "Quantifying Arab Democracy: Democracy in the Middle East." Middle East Quarterly, 13(3), 2006.

Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen are ranked as the second highest democracies, each with 9 points or 50 percent. Surprisingly, the fourth ranking went to Morocco, which lost three points and scored only 8 or 44 percent. The lowest position went to Saudi Arabia, which remained the last democracy with only 4 points or 22 percent. Comparing the results of both surveys of 1999 and 2005 shows that democracy has not progressed but regressed, at least for some Arab countries, while some other Arab countries have marginally improved their democracy. For instance, six countries – Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Lybia, Oman and UAE – remained at their previous levels. Also, seven countries – Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen – partly improved their score. Four countries – Kuwait, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia – became less democratic[11].

In fact, "The failures of Arab authoritarian regimes to sustain earlier gains, or to at least contain mounting economic and social crises of the Arab world, have been directly linked to the non-democratic and non-participatory nature of the regimes"[12]. This failure to sustain earlier gains of 1999 survey is concretised in new shocking numbers of the 2005 survey.

The 2005 results imply that the Arab world remains dictatorial and rigid in making the slightest of changes towards better statistics of democracy and good governance. However, these scores have not, at any rate, come without their disturbing results. Many Arab countries are again trying to perform whatever necessary to get ahead with their democracy ranking, but still the autocratic basics are still taking hold of the whole thing. This situation brings us back to the initial idea that Arab leaders adopt the rhetoric of democracy but not its spirit, since their policies remain the same. For instance.

Qatar, with its score increasing from 28 to 33 percent, is no democracy. Although the emir introduced several democratic initiatives including a new constitution, a municipal council, and free broadcast of the Al-Jazeera satellite station, he remains an autocrat [...] In Bahrain, although Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa is committed to parliamentary democracy and has allowed women and associations to participate in politics, he remains head of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Governance is even more absolute in Oman. Sultan Qaboos al Bu Said rules by royal decree. While the Council of Oman – consisting of an elected consultation council and an appointed state council – may be considered an important move toward democratization, the royal office controls Oman's internal and external affairs and decides all intelligence and security matters.While many Omanis and outside observers may consider Qaboos forward-thinking and progressive, the absence of democratic infrastructure combined with the lack of a clear successor make the lack of reform dangerous[13].

In fact, Arab leaders engage in "controlled liberalization to allow opposition groups to blow off steam without creating a situation that could threaten regime

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[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Elbadawi Ibrahim, Makdisi Samir, and Milante Gary, 'Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit: The Role of Oil and Conflicts', in Ibrahim, Elbadawi and Samir, Makdisi (Editors), *Democracy in the Arab World. Explaining the Deficit*, New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 41.

[13] Saliba Sarsar, pp. 21-28.

power"[14]. In their "democratic" interactions with the Arab public, the people in power do not, indeed, seek to implement democracy as it is –, that is, a system of government by all the people of a country, usually through elected representatives thought of as allowing freedom of speech, religion and political opinion – but in a way that should be compatible with the high interests of the powerful. This is, in fact, very revealing and thought-provoking, given that "democracy ought to be a system in which the specialised class is trained to serve the masters, the people who own the society"[15]. According to Lipmann's elaborated theory of "progressive democracy"[16], any social structure can be divided into three main constituents: "the executive groups", "the specialized class" and the masses or, to use Chomsky's words, "the bewildered herd"[17]. According to such a structure, the Arab social system and democracy is positioned to progress along a line that dictates on the weak to serve the strong. That is to say, the executive groups consist of wealthy individuals taking hold of most businesses. The role of such groups is to issue orders for the specialized class to run. The elite, therefore, consists of the elected actors who should follow orders strictly or else lose their prestigious positions. In the middle of all this, the masses are not supposed to play any role but act as "spectators in democracy"[18]. In support of this, Rami G. Khouri (2001) argues that,

For the political decision-making systems in most Arab countries are pre-configured to maintain a pro-government, centrist majority that allows more and more debate and discussion of important issues, but maintains real decision-making in the hands of small elite groups who have managed public affairs and matters of state for some decades now. How many times in recent years, for example, have you seen any discussion of military vs. developmental budget expenditures in an Arab country?[19]

In this regard, as long as the "bewildered herd" maintain their passive roles of being the spectators who only watch but do not exert any mental efforts to think or act accordingly, the project of democracy is perceived to be a success. But, once the "bewildered herd" reacts in protest, a crisis in democracy occurs in the sense that the reaction of the masses can hamper the imperial plans of the executive groups, as Noam Chomsky would have it:

The people with real power are the ones who own the society, which is a pretty narrow group. If the specialised class can come along and say, I can serve your interests, then they will be part of the executive group. You have got to keep that quiet. That means they have to have instilled in them the beliefs and doctrines that will serve the interests of private power. Unless they can master that skill they are not part of the specialised class […] the rest of the bewildered herd basically just have to be distracted[20].

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[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Noam Chomsky, *Media Control*, Canada, Seven Stories Press, 2002, p. 27.

[16] Qtd in *Ibid*, p. 25.

[17] *Ibid*, p. 26.

[18] Noam Chomsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 16-17.

[19] Rami G. Khouri, 'Arab satellite TV: Promoting democracy or autocracy?', Media Monitors Network, May 9th 2001, accessed online on June 3rd 2014, at http://www.mediamonitors.net/khouri13.html.

[20] Noam Chomsky, *Media Control*, pp. 18-19.

This can be the way according to which democracy in the Arab world is being implemented. Democracy, in this sense, seems to be a highly monitored social system. It is understood in terms of power that is being manipulated by a minority so as to monitor a majority; a minority that can be described as a Lobby group that seeks privatisation of everything, even morals and principles. In fact, the dominant theme of the Arab democracy is to "restrict the public arena and transfer decisions to the hands of uncountable private tyrannies," this, in turn, plays an important role in, "removing the public from potential influence on policy"[21]. In this sense, democracy is best understood as laying down strict rules –, which are less than democratic – according to which the Arab public is to be controlled and rendered subservient.

In fact, people grew tired of following orders which further make them lose more than win. They have become aware of the necessity to speak the truth to power and oppose their leaders' dictatorial policies and regimes. Accordingly, countries like Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Lybia, among others, have witnessed an unexpected mass uprising calling for drastic reforms. These mass movements have proven their power in toppling down long-established dictatorships and bringing about, to some extent, acceptable and honourable reforms. It is now time for Arab leaders to settle disputes down by making daring reforms and improving human rights, since disputes are no longer settled by delivering enthusiastic speeches or promising new horizons that seem to be bleak and hard to achieve. As well, it can be helpful to prompt the decision makers to tune their channels of dialogue in the receptive grounds of their country for democracy to properly reign. Accordingly, reconciliation, democracy and human rights can be smoothly and enthusiastically received with open arms by the Arab masses as well as the other nations of the world. It is at this stage that we can decide to overcome our differences and look for each other's similarities for dialogical, peaceful and developmental objectives to be accomplished.

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[21] Noam Chomsky, *Failed states*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 2006, p. 218.