External and Internal Causes for Democracy Deficit in the Arab World

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Abstract:

Despite the socioeconomic growth that the Arab world witnessed, economic development is still not yet achieved, and a democracy deficit has characterized the region for decades. This paper analyzes the core factors behind the democracy deficit in the Arab world, including the United States' low intensity democracy in the region and the Arab weak political and socio-economic conditions. This research is a critical review that analyses the principal concepts underlying the two approaches of democracy: the developmental approach and the formal/electoral approach. The analysis reveals that US democracy promotion is limited to the "formal" electoral democracy; however, "developmental" democracy that might ameliorate Arab countries' economic and social conditions [2]is marginalized for the sake of its neoliberal economic policies.

Keywords: *democracy deficit, developmental democracy, formal/ electoral democracy, "low intensity" democracy, neoliberal economic policies, US democracy promotion.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the post-Cold War, the world tended to be more democratic than ever before. It witnessed the trust in democracy as the appropriate political system that might enhance citizens' civil rights, maintain states' stability, and probably lead to countries' economic development.

Nowadays, the world witnesses an increase in democratic states as well as attempts from undemocratic states to achieve successful transitions to democracy. However, this is not the case for Arab world states wherein authoritarianism is almost certainly characterizing them since their independence (Amin S. , 2016).Consequently, this research paper tries to illustrate that the Arab democracy deficit is due to both the United States' formal/electoral approach of democratization in the Arab world and the Arab weak political and socio-economic conditions.

To achieve these objectives, the paper is a critical review of selected readings based on qualitative data collection and qualitative analyses procedures. It delves into the main causes of democracy deficit in the Arab region. This review shows that US democracy promotion in the region is "low intensity", which gives importance to US economic liberal interests (Amin & El Kenz, 2012) and supports Arab authoritarian regimes(Akbarzadeh, Piscatori, MacQueen, & Saikal, 2012). However, low-intensity democracy marginalizes developmental democracy that Arab citizens yearn for to find solutions to their poverty, unemployment, and economic inequalities.

This research paper evinces that the US exported a formal/electoral approach of democratization that scrutinized Arab liberal elections and civil rights, defocused diminishing unemployment and poverty, and combating cronyism and corruption in the Arab world. This paper shows that democracy should not be limited to liberal elections mainly because most Arab countries held elections, but authoritarianism still exists; cronyists dominate the economy and Arab governments hold an imported foreign model of democracy to serve their interests. For Arab citizens, electoral democracy embarked on by the US is inappropriate, especially that after elections all promises for economic and social reforms that might contribute to developmental democracy were neglected and disenfranchised by their governments. Developmental democracy, which entails good governance, and social and economic reforms dovetailing with Arab peoples' interests, is the type of democracy to establish step by step.

This article is limited to the political economy approach that depends on the writings of Carothers (2006) and Sorenson (2008) about American democratization and how its success depends on the type of democracy applied. *Models of Democracy*, authored by Held (2006), is an important document to understand the various models of democracy.

1- American Democracy Promotion in MENA Countries

1.1 The United States' Claimed Leadership for Arab World's Democracy Promotion

After the Second World War, the US provided substantial aid to 'liberalize' and 'democratize' Eastern European countries from communism. Indeed, democracy promotion started to be considered an American foreign policy goal. The establishment of the House of Freedom in 1941 proved the pre-steps of how the US considered its democratic liberal values universal, and how it forced the world's countries to follow the abstract model of its democracy(Vanhanen, 2000). Based on its economic and strategic hegemony in the post-Cold War, the US has given itself the responsibility for being the world's policeman in advocating democracy, human rights, and political freedom; and in scrutinizing world governments' legitimacy(Markakis, 2012)

In the Post-Cold War, Arab countries have been influenced by the financial globalization that has characterized the world economy and embarked its liberalization. These countries became more dependent on international economic institutions ruled by the US, including the International Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), aiming at finding solutions to their debt problems (Heydarian, 2014). Consequently, the US leads an international claim to call for enhancing economic liberalization coupled with the claim of democracy promotion in these developing countries (Hassan, 2011). Accordingly, the US adopted the policy of consolidating democracy in MENA to preserve a stable environment for its liberal values of free trade and open markets; (Markakis, 2012) supports this saying: "At the core of this institutional model of democracy, liberal democratic political values and free market economic principles are posited

as intrinsically linked. Successive American administrations have argued that free markets are a prerequisite for democracy"(p. 33)

As a hyper power in the world, the US took the task of promoting and spreading democracy in the world, mainly in Arab MENA countries[3] that are considered less democratic. President George Walker Bush's National Security Strategy initiated a "democracy promotion" policy in the MENA region through diplomacy and military intervention, especially after the US's vulnerability to terrorist attacks on 9/11. Two important strategies that he adopted are Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Partnership Initiative. They mainly preserve MENA political reforms by creating democratic elections, and they maintain the liberal economic principles of free trade and open markets, claiming that economic liberalization may lead to democratization (Hassan, 2008).

Stability was the US's aim to protect its interests in Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Tunisia even if these countries were authoritarian regimes; however, its vulnerability to terrorist attacks changed its policy from maintaining stability to promoting democracy. Pressured by the US foreign policy, Arab governments made political reforms that seemed to improve civil rights and that allowed greater political reforms principally through elections, besides other reforms in abolishing states of emergency. Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, and Morocco, to various degrees, have improved civil rights (Markakis, 2012). In Iraq, the American democracy promotion took the form of a military war in 2003, which led to upholding elections by allowing the rise of a multi-party system.

1.2. "Formal" versus "Developmental" Democracy

The two approaches of democracy, formal and developmental, are opaque, and identifying which approach is the most suitable for peoples' rights is impenetrable. Thus, (Schumpeter && Swedberg, 2003)explains that "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (p. 269). In other words, he defines democracy as the method by which people elect representatives in competitive elections to carry out their will. Schumpeter's definition stands out from(Held, 2006) broader definition; wherein he contends that the meaning of democracy is that:

> Persons should enjoy equal rights and, accordingly, equal obligations in the specification of the political framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them; that is, they should be free and equal in the processes of deliberation about the conditions of their own lives and in the determination of these conditions, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others.(p. 264)

On the one hand, Schumpeter (2006) limits the meaning of democracy to voting in elections to choose those who are going to represent them in political institutions. However, Held's (2006) meaning of democracy transcends citizens' political participation in their rights of voting only, but it tries to combine such a right with social and economic rights as well. In poor and eroded socio-economic conditions, democracy cannot evolve: "Without tough social and economic rights, rights with respect to the state could not be fully enjoyed; and without state rights, new forms of inequality of power, wealth and status could systematically disrupt the implementation of social and economic liberties"(Held, 2006, p. 278).

Many scholars in Western societies show their dissatisfaction with the formal/electoral approach of their democracies, including Jean Jacques Rousseau who called for "direct democracy" and criticized the situation of democracy in Britain to be limited to voting in elections. Instead, people should be directly involved in making the law that governs them. Rousseau (1762) declared that: "The English people believes itself to be free, it is gravely mistaken; it is free only during the election of Members of Parliament; as soon as the members are elected, the people are enslaved; it is nothing"(Held, 2006, p. 46).

US democracy promotion in Arab countries does not aim at boosting them in democratic reforms; it rather serves the US in saving its vital interests of containing terrorism, providing

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[3] This idea is illustrated in the Hegemony stability theory, in which the United States alleged the leadership of world's political economy as maintaining stable world economy through spreading liberal economic values.

open markets, and protecting its core ally Israel[4]. It was far from addressing the social, economic, ethnic and religious problems, which is the role of democracy promotion. This idea is illustrated more by Carothers (2009) when distinguishing between "formal/ political" and "developmental" functions of promoting democracy. The "formal" approach to sustain democracy has a limited political purpose; it focuses political processes and institutions as: elections, political parties, and civil society groups interested in politics. However, developmental democracy assistance is a long-term process that identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues(Carothers, 2009).

Political reforms should start from the state itself by its thinkers that defend their society's interest, not from foreigners that ignore its specific conditions. For this reason, democracy is not a ready exemplar to be exported or applied by strong powers. (Carothers, 1995)criticizedthe US adoption of "the Great Leader" approach to promote democracy abroad. He stated that the US cared more about formal democracy that concerns elections and formal institutions instead of supporting the political reforms that might improve the economy and society. (Carothers, 1995), in *Democracy Promotion under Clinton,* explains how the US democracy promotion is formal/electoral and not "developmental":

> U.S. officials will make much of the fact that a new constitution has been promulgated in a transitional country rather than examine how the constitution was arrived at or how much it embodies an actual sociopolitical consensus. They will extol an election with little attention to the more complex realities of actual political participation. They will herald a new parliament while knowing little of the actual relations between the parliament and the citizenry. Supporting democracy too often resembles the application of a preprinted checklist in which the institutional forms of U.S.-style democracy are financed and praised while the more complex and more important realities of political life are ignored. (p. 23)

The Schumpterian meaning of democracy reflects the US democracy promotion in Iraq, where promoting democracy through giving priority to political elections was not successful. The stability that characterized the country was replaced by chaos and anarchy, and division within the Iraqi society was aggravated after the so-called American democratization. Moreover, because of violence, the Iraqi government engaged in military and security measures that seemed to be against Iraqi people's liberties and freedoms. Thus, American democracy promotion deteriorated peoples' freedoms instead of enhancing it(Dueck, 2008).

People in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria revolted against their "autocratic" governments in 2011, believing that democracy could heal their problems. Alas, the post-Arab uprisings worsened stability that characterized Arab countries for a long period of time[5], including the breakdown of Arab state in Syria, Yemen and Libya and the absence of mature democracy in Tunisia and Egypt(Schmitter && Sika, 2017). Even if these Arab countries toppled autocratic "regimes" and held elections to establish new democratic governments, they were frustrated by the same economic and social problems. Therefore, stability deteriorated by insecurity, terrorism, chaos, and anarchy. Accordingly, despite democracy promotion being an internal affair, the "formal" Schumpeterian interpretation of democracy proved its ineffectiveness. Tunisia is one of these countries, despite the overthrow of the dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 and democratic elections, forty-two percent of respondents in a 2013 poll stated they were 'not at all satisfied' with democracy (Tunisians Disaffected with Leaders as Conditions Worsen, 2013). As a result, they succeeded to stop the tyranny of their autocrats but failed to prevent another tyranny of chaos, poverty, unemployment, income inequality, and corruption.

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[4] Read more on the United States' support of Israel, USMiddle Eastpolicy-making p 39 a list of American presidents, democrats, and republicans supporting Israel as being an ally and strategic asset. P 98Political Islam and the United States by Maria do Céu Pinto.
[5] For Georges corm, petrol, and the Soviet Union maintained stability in these countries.

1.3 US Low Intensity Democracy in Arab Countries

The US democracy promotion in the MENA region is much more market-oriented instead of democracy consolidation. During the 1980's, the American president, Ronald Reagan, declared that it is the responsibility of his country to lead world's 'free market' and democratic revolutions, emphasizing the link between free market and democracy. Also, President G. W. Bush's most ambitious proposal was the creation of a Middle East free trade area[6]: "Across the globe, free markets and trade have helped defeat poverty, and taught men and women the habits of liberty. So, I propose the establishment of a US-Middle East free trade area within a decade, to bring the Middle East into an expanding circle of opportunity" (Bush, 'President Bush Presses for Peace in the Middle East: Remarks by the President in Commencement Address at the University of South Carolina', 2003). The US supported Arab authoritarian regimes mainly because they preserve its vital and national interests; however, it stood against democracy when Islamist parties won elections. (Robinson, 1996)criticized the US's democracy promotion in many parts of the world and considered it "Polyarchy democracy", being characterized by the liberal economic and market interests rather than the "public" democratic values. Indeed, it happened that the US opposed democratic governance in MENA region when it conflicted with the American vital interests.

The American claim that promoting democracy would be appropriate to preserve the Arab world's economic development and integration in the international economy is merely a falsehood to save the US's interests of spreading liberal values of capitalism. (Dahl, 1998) stated that: "although democracy has existed only in countries with a market-capitalist economy, market-capitalism has existed in non-democratic countries" (p. 170). Indeed, the US's priority lies in spreading its vital interests of economic liberalism. Although Ben Ali's authoritarian regime lacked democracy, the US supported it mainly because it adopted westernized reforms, such as free trade. Accordingly, this regime was not eager to maintain democracy and economic development in the region, but strived to be loyal to American leadership and its economic liberalization (Akbarzadeh, Piscatori, MacQueen, & Saikal, 2012, p. 4)

Arab countries may establish their own democratic system that emphasizes equality, participation and freedom to combat corruption and cronyism -without outsiders' intervention. Meanwhile, liberal capitalist reforms may be beneficial, by imperatively orienting them to radically reforming economy and politics (Dahl, 1998). Schweller (2000)supported this idea by saying that"while liberal democracy requires a market economy, capitalism does not require liberal democracy" (Cox, Ikenberry, Ikenberry, & Inoguchi, 2000, p. 53). In fact, democracy promotion policies mainly target the spread of US's capitalist values, and definitely not the improvement of MENA countries'economies. Serious structural political and economic reforms are vital to fit Arab demands for combating corruption, unleashing freedoms, and equal opportunities. Accordingly, focusing on democracy transition advocated by foreign powers, headed by the US that marginalized Arab countries' real needs, is a myth per se.

(Sorensen, 2008)[7] considers foreign powers' democracy promotion may create a state of disorder and anarchy within societies. He clarifies that the process of regime change is risky, as confrontation may happen between those in power who want to maintain their position and those of the transition government. Accordingly, these "regimes" exacerbate religious, ethnic, and cultural differences to create a state of anarchy and to preserve their continuation in power. (Dahl, 1998)shows that for democracy to be improved along with strong democratic political institutions, the country should be free from "conflicting subcultures".

Classical liberalism theorists' claim that the consolidation of democracy would promote socio-economic rights and provide high-quality conditions for its people is contradictory. China was not considered a liberal democratic country by the West, but it focused on economic reforms and tried to enhance living conditions for its citizens. Health and education were promoted even in remote rural regions; incomes increased; economic development took off

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[6] Read more on low intensity democracy: political power in the new world order edited by Barry Gills, Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson. Gills, Barry K., Joel Rocamora, and Richard Wilson. *Low Intensity Democracy*: Political Power in the new world order. Pluto Press (UK),1993.

[7] Georg Sørensen, Democracy and Democratization: Processes and Prospects in a changing world (Dilemmas in World Politics). Westview Press Incorporated, 2008.

within the country. Prioritizing investment rather than consummation, the Chinese government succeeded in maintaining socio-economic development. Moreover, the Chinese government witnessed long-term reforms industry and agriculture. Thus, politicians are now speaking about the possibility of flexible transition to democracy in China after its successful economic and social reforms. (Bell, 2015) rejected the idea of dividing the world into "good democracies" and "bad autocracies"; he considers China's political system dissimilar to the West's liberal democracy, which does not belong to "the bad autocracies" (p. 32).

1.4 Criticism of the Claim of Universality in US Democracy Promotion

The US claimed that the American liberal democracy model is universal to be followed by the whole world and to be considered a final model of democracy, as shown by (Fukuyama, 1992), in the End of History and the Last Man[8]. It goes without saying that life is a continuous process, and societies are still developing in the world since the human mind seeks evolution and novelty. Accordingly, democracy cannot take a final shape; it rather grows and evolves according to each country's internal social, historical, and cultural conditions.

The universality of democracy played an integral part in George Walker Bush's administration's foreign policy outlook from the time it assumed office. (Jackson && Nexon, 2003) proclaimed that "it is often used to conflate the US and the world in the protection of liberal democracy and liberty" (p. 146). In his Second inaugural address of January 2005, (Bush, 2005) announced the US's responsibility for spreading democracy in the whole world: "So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" (para 7). At the core of his doctrine was a fundamental claim that all people had the natural right to freedom. Furthermore, people liberated from repression and authoritarian ruling would choose freedom, liberal institutions, and ultimately democracy as their form of government. Such ideas about the universality of freedom and democracy were consistently applied by his administration in the policy of MENA democratization:

> Our commitment to democracy is also tested in the Middle East, which is my focus today and must be a focus of American policy for decades to come. In many nations of the Middle East -- countries of great strategic importance -- democracy has not yet taken root... I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free. (Bush, 2003, para 17)

(Gould, 2004)explains that democracy and liberalism have to be defended by including intellectual strategies that should be "dialectical" and societal, without being influenced by "traditional" liberalism that protects the strong powers' interests. In the recent era, exercising democracy is confined to liberal "autonomy" that is linked to the West, and that is based on liberal values exported by strong powers to the whole world as universal. The limitation of democracy to abstract Western values of freedom and liberty, and the exaggeration in considering people's crucial role in creating their own laws -'rule by the people, for the people- and in giving it the cover of universality to be adopted by all societies, is a myth itself.(Markakis, 2012)

(Dahl, 2000)explains the gapsin liberal democracy in democratic countries themselves. He claims that "In many of the oldest and most stable democratic countries, citizens possess little confidence in some key democratic institutions. Yet most citizens continue to believe in the desirability of democracy" (p. 35). Accordingly, the false idea of the universality of liberal democracy is proved, for it still did not get total support from the people of the democratic countries themselves. (Smith, 2010) invites the American government to import democratic features from other models of the democratic system to modify the weakness of its political system, which almost proved the imperfectness of the American liberal democracy model.

Each country should create its own model/ theory of democracy that fits its cultural and historical conditions, which took a long road of struggle. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Western world sought liberalism at first, instead of democracy, because liberalism at that time was mainly matched with the social and political status quo. For example, in Britain,liberalism was considered more important than democracy(Hayek, 2011).Britain 's radicals called for liberal rights to protect the ruled from the tyranny of their ruler. Its political reform came after a period of gloom, darkness, and violence. The Monarch's absolutism was

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[8] Fukuyama, Francis. The end of history and the last man. Free Press, 1992.

challenged by the execution of King Charles I in 1649, after a civil war that gave birth to republic creation under Georges Cromwell. The divine power of the Monarch came to an end after the Glorious Revolution through enacting the Bill of Rights in 1689. Such reforms were unintended, and they did not aim at making political reforms and achieving democracy. Furthermore, the Magna Carta (1215) did not provide protection to the whole population for the first time, but only barons benefited from the diminished divine power of King John. Creating a "Republic" was not an end per se to initiate a political reform, but a conflict of interests between Parliamentarians and King Charles I about financial and religious matters caused it. Ergo, democracy and political reforms came after a fierce struggle that is specific to each country's political, social and cultural environments.

Even democratic countries have challenges that face the legitimacy of their democracies, which seemed clear in the writings of some scholars and writers who criticized the undemocratic themes within their constitutions. They criticized the way democracy is practiced in democratic countries. (Dahl, 2003), in *how democratic is the American constitution,* raised the question of whether Americans were given the opportunity to be involved in making their constitution. He also adds that considering the American constitution as a universal democratic model for world's countries to adopt is just a delusion. (Skidmore & Tripp, 1989) show the imperfectness of democratic countries' legislative systems, for legislators who are expected to be people's representatives do not always reflect people's thoughts in an adequate way. Indeed, public opinion is not always sufficiently taken into consideration in legislation. Legislators claim that the "will of people" is probably difficult to be achieved (p. 55).

British scholars also criticized their liberal democracy and raised questions about the sovereignty of the British people, how they do not directly participate in the decision-making process, and how their role is limited to voting in elections. Judge (2004, as cited in(Turpin & Tomkins, 2007), in criticism of the British parliamentary system, has drawn attention to the 'paradox' that parliamentary representation serves to include "the people in decision-making, indirectly and infrequently through the process of elections; yet, simultaneously, it serves to exclude them from direct and continuous participation in the decision-making process" (p. 494)

Debates about democracy models are still open to discussion, and new theories to democracy would appear. There is no universal model for democracy to be applied to all countries with their different social, political, and economic conditions. (Cunningham, 2002), (Dryzek, Honig, & Phillips, 2008), Dunleavy (1996), and mainly Held (2006) tried to explain the different theories of a democratic state: Classic, Deliberative, Direct democracy, or Liberal democracy. They attempted to show that a democratic state does not take one shape, but it rather evolves through time. Besides, they postulate that democracy differs from one country to another based on the political system, being federal, parliamentary, or monarchical. The US, as an example, does not adopt a Direct Democracy, simply because of its federal system and the fear of "the tyranny of the majority" (Dryzek, Honig, & Phillips, 2008). Essentially, democracy with all its models is linked to 'national sovereignty' that emphasizes states' and their people's will in creating their model of democracy.

For democracy to be maintained and enhanced, it should depend on citizens' will. Democracy cannot be exported and universalized; it can only be produced and learned inside (Clapham, 1996). Elections inside the state depend on citizens' will and their freedom of choice in selecting their representatives. Consequently, the US should not export democracy since peoples' rights cannot be imported. Democracy, in all its definitions, connotes the vital role of people in electing their representatives, being presidents, prime ministers, parliamentarians, or congress members. Thus, consolidating democracy can be achieved through clarifying the relation between the state and its people. (Kamrava, 2007) explains that the transition to democracy can be determined by clarifying the relation between society and the state through transparent elections and equality among political figures and political parties. It is also important to start reforming societies and creating strong civil societies to participate in political issues. Governments should take responsibility for initiating political reforms and facilitating the democratization process, without the intervention of foreign powers.

2. What prevents Arab countries from being democratic?

Authoritarianism is almost certainly characterizing the Arab region since its independence. Although there have been multi-political parties in the recent era, it seems that, implicitly, just one party monopolizes the political power. Besides, the political framework for Arab world's reforms is imported from past colonizers, which makes it inappropriate for the MENA region's political, social, and cultural bases. (Elbadawi & Makdisi, 2010) and (Amin & El Kenz, 2012) posit that there were undemocratic governments that appeared in the MENA region in the post-colonial era. (Schlumberger, 2007) adds that these governments are autocratic, but they maintain stability by linking their own interests to the powerful elements of their societies, including nationalism, social justice, religion, and material rewards as providing jobs, housing and so on. Hence, their interests are given a political legitimacy in front of their peoples.

In post decolonization, most world countries started their way to democracy, except MENA countries. (Pharés, 2013) criticized the failure of democracy in MENA region in post colonialism. He contends that Latin American countries, although colonized by European foreign powers and experienced the rule of military regimes, succeeded in creating a multi-party system and in achieving a matured transition to democracy. Besides, he praises Asia, Philippines, Japan and India for evolving into liberal and democratic governments after a military occupation. However, autocracy characterized the political sphere in republic as well as monarchical MENA countries. (Bennabi && Rashid, 1995) proclaim that, even after colonialism, Arabs did not benefit from their independence to establish economic theories that help them be economic producers rather than remaining consumers. Backwardness and isolation from the world's economy characterized Arab countries in post-colonialism.

Although the Arab and Muslim world witnessed some democratic claims that dated back to the nineteenth century and even to the twelfth century, it remained undemocratic. (DeLue & Dale, 2016) claim that Averroes (Ibn Rushd) believed that democracy grants liberties and freedoms to people. He considered that since people get their rights, they are going to contribute to the development of their societies. Ibn Rushd called for enlightenment and for women's equal rights as well. The nineteenth century also witnessed the writings of certain Muslim scholars, such as Rifaah Tantawi and Sheikh Mohamed Abdou Alkawakibi, who called for intellectual development "*Nahda*", and who considered democracy as the best political system for Muslim and Arab governments in achieving socio-economic development. Unfortunately, these claims were neglected and marginalized by Arab governments, and the writings that called for an Arab "Nahda" were not taken as a starting point for political and social reforms, as what really happened in Europe's Enlightenment and Renaissance experiences. The Arab rulers did not benefit from those thinkers' thoughts to initiate developmental democratic reforms in their societies.

(Amin S. , 2016) attributes such failure to the Arab's refusal to construct a "rupture" with their tradition, for modernity that enhanced the European success was deficient in Arabs' governments. He called for secularism but without linking it to the western interpretation. For him, secularism is modernity and creativity. He continues his criticism to Nahda, "… is there-fore not the time marking the birth of modernity in the Arab world but rather the period of its abortion" (p. 130)

Democracy in Arab countries was absent because of their dependence on hydrocarbons that sustained authoritarian regimes. (Corm, 2012) demonstrated the idea of the "tyranny of petrol" to show how Arab countries' reliance on natural resources that increased their incomes delayed initiating structural economic reforms that touch main sectors, including industry and agriculture. The petrol "tyranny" also reflects how autocracy came to existence after colonialism, when ruling groups started to consider these natural resources as their own properties instead of a national property. The Arab world's ruling groups' dependence on hydrocarbon rents as well as their dominance over these resources prevented economic and democratic developments. Hence, it is necessary that reforming the Arab society and economy should be parallel with political reforms.

It seemed impossible to achieve democracy consolidation without redistributing the benefits of the national economy growth. In the Arab world characterized by 'patrimonial' states, ruling families still control a large share of national agricultural and mineral riches (Corm, 2015); (Achcar, 2013). The Al Sa'ud family in Saudi Arabia makes no attempt to

conceal its ownership of the country's principal natural resource; indeed, autocratic power and 'asabiya' functioned in conditions of despotism and nepotism, as stated by (Hourani, Hourani, & Ruthven, 2013):

> since the state's foundation in 1920 the Al Sa'ud, a clan of the 'Aniza have effectively been its owners as well as its rulers. Oil is not just the kingdom's primary national resource: it is first and foremost private family property. (p. 486)

(Kamrava, 2007) stresses the role of political and economic factors in constructing democracy deficit, making his analysis far from linking it to culture or Islam. (Kamrava, 2007) proposes that the middle class should be financially autonomous and independent from the state to contribute to democratization through professional associations participating in political decisions. However, he limited the middle class's contribution to a "societal context" and in a democratic opening atmosphere, instead of being an "actual catalyst for authoritarian withdrawals" (p. 199). Nonetheless, (Achcar, 2013) believes that the middle class turns out to be a kind of private capitalism, and if it is applied in the Arab world, it would lead to worse results. An example refers to the emergence of crony capitalism in which autocratic governments give privileges to crony capitalists in return to save their interests, as stated by (Achcar, 2013): "The state bourgeoisie benefits from a rent-generating situation, granted by the political power. In return, it pays the rulers a rent in cash" (p. 58).

(Luciani, 2017) administered a survey on economic and political developments in the MENA. He mainly focuses on economic problems that aggravate the Arab situation. In his volume, he tries to concentrate on short-term policies (economic reforms) that may create appropriate conditions to stabilize democracy in this region and to maintain the executive's strength in Arab countries. Luciani also tried to provide proposals for long term reforms that will increase the chance for these countries to achieve economic and political developments. Economic diversification is essential not just to depend on hydrocarbons, but also to reform the important sectors of industry, agriculture, and tourism: "These include measures such as the abolition of fuel subsidies combined with a targeted system of unconditional cash transfers, and policies that favour currency devaluation and reform of the banking sector to support small-scale enterprises" (p. ix). Furthermore, (Brack, 2012) called for reforming the Arab financial system to end the public sector domination on banks, and for financial integration among the Arab states to contribute to the economic and social developments of the region. She also called for diversification concerning MENA financial cooperation in order not to remain attached to the Western world, and to direct its cooperation to African countries as well. Economic and political developments are important, and they should precede the transition towards democracy.

Unequal redistribution of incomes is a world phenomenon, but for MENA countries it was considered a serious factor in preventing democracy, especially that they are in the first step towards their democracy transition. Economic globalization created monopoly over wealth by specific groups of people; in Tunisia and Egypt, trade unions had vital roles in the economy; however, economic globalization weakened and marginalized the national economies (Corm, 2012, p. 848).

II. Conclusion

Arab countries, being republics or monarchies, witnessed democracy deficit since their independence. The US low-intensity democracy in the region and Arab authoritarianism are important factors in delaying and preventing structural political and economic reforms that lead to the establishment of developed countries and "good Governance".

The US adopted the 'traditional liberalism theory' that universalised its own model of democracy and linked its values of freedom and human rights to the whole world. However, its exported democracy to MENA did not settle the basis for democracy transition in the region, even after its military invasion to Iraq in 2003 and its worse impact on the country stability that created chaotic and violent conditions. Besides, it proved its unfamiliarity with the internal conditions of the region. With its failure in Iraq, the Bush administration revised the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, launched in 2003, and emphasized the need for Arab governments to set the agenda for reforms. When the external pressure from the US for political reform was reduced in 2006, Arab governments were impressed by the US formal/electoral

democratic programs, and they initiated reforms in creating free elections, improving civil rights, and ending states of emergency in Iraq, Egypt and Palestine (Schlumberger, 2007). Nonetheless, these reforms later on proved ineffective in changing their conditions through a series of uprisings. Consequently, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Syria entered a new era of liberalism where citizens revolted, claiming for celebrating democracy and murdering autocracy. The US was in a dilemma when its allies in Egypt and Tunisia were under existential threat from the protesters' pressures: to support either democratic change there or long-time allies. After autocrat governments left power, mainly in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, Arab citizens were frustrated by the new elected democratic governments that failed in finding solutions to their economic and social difficulties. Moreover, democracy transition would not succeed when imposed by a foreign power_ the US_ especially that its main objective was to incrementally change the region status quos to be compatible with the pursuit of American interests[9]. Democracy would not be exported because people's rights could not be imported. Furthermore, democracy will not be improved in weak economic and social conditions that characterized the region for a period of time.

Interestingly, some internal factors contributed to democracy 'deficit' in MENA region (Elbadawi & Makdisi, 2010). Decisively, Arab governments did not enact serious political, social and economic reforms for creating a democracy model matched with the region's specific historical, cultural and societal dimensions. Autocracy characterized the political life in MENA's post colonialism where Arab rulers prioritized their own interests, especially to remain in power, to the national interests. Arab state rulers monopolized means of coercion and legitimized their existence to maintain a state of stability to sustain their power (Hourani, 2012). "Nahda" that Arab thinkers called for in the ninetieth century failed to create the basis for Arab enlightenment that may have changed the Arab way of thinking towards modernity and political and economic reforms. In addition, the region's split into different tides of thinking (secularists, Islamists whether conservatives, Eclectics, or modernists) also contributed to democracy deficit. Moreover, economic policies and decisions that should have been the responsibility of economic experts were politicized and dominated by the state and business elites[10]. Furthermore, r rentier states became driven by "tyranny" that stood behind the region's economic weakness and autocratic dominance (Georg, 2015).

Ergo, for Arab countries to succeed in maintaining their democracy, the latter should start from the inside with a cosmopolitan coordination with all members of the society. More importantly, structural economic reforms are significant to find solutions to unemployment and poverty that led people to strike and revolt against their states. These revolts would provide an opportunity for foreign interventions to control these countries, and threaten their national sovereignty.

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[9]These include the free flow of oil and gas, security of regional allies such as Israel and Saudi Arabia, and cooperation on military, counter-terrorism, and counter-proliferation issues, providing open markets.

[10] "Waiting for Godot": Regime Change without Democratization in the Middle East Author(s): Holger Albrecht and Oliver Schlumberger

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