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# HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY BETWEEN THOUGHT AND PRACTICE IN THE MODERN HISTORY OF THE ARAB WORLD

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## **Human Rights and Democracy between Thought and Practice in the Modern History of The Arab World**

### **Synopsis:**

Deliberating upon human rights and democracy is meaningless in the political and economic experience of our Arab world. The greatest suffering of democracy in the Arab world is evidenced by the stark contrast between the era of the masses and the continued search for the charismatic political figure or the loyal leader, as well as between the modern era of ultra-soft technology and the mentality of tribal sectarianism of the nomadic community, which still influences the values of that society.

## **Human Rights and Democracy between Thought and Practice in the Modern History of the Arab World**

### **Abstract**

Deliberating upon human rights and democracy is meaningless in the political and economic experience of our Arab world. The reality stands in contrast to what Arab claims as to the existence of the Arab states; their lives depend on the monopolization of right and duty, yet that same “duty” prevents the possibility of the investment of human rights in the field of experiences as it conflicts with the powers that be. Perhaps the greatest suffering of democracy in the Arab world is evidenced by the stark contrast between the era of the masses and the continued search for the charismatic political figure or the loyal leader, or savior, as well as between the modern era of ultra-soft technology and the mentality of tribal sectarianism of the nomadic community, which still influences the values of that society.

The Arab region still derives its value and importance from its historical strategic location, which gives it the status of presence in modern international and contemporary relations. The Arab regimes in the last period deliberately aim to rule political life, thereby reducing the extent of possible political action from outside power and apparatuses. Therefore, what must prevail in the relationship between the Arab world and the West must involve the reconsideration regarding the legacy of enmity and disagreement throughout the history of colonialism. Also, the Arab world, must overcome its opposition to a new vision and overcome the threshold of backwardness created by having its own constituents, civilization, religion, history, and language. The Arab world must take into account the high technological realities and the requirements of the modern state where its conditions require a scope of participation of individuals and groups in the management of the public and private affair.

Globalization is also considered a compelling opportunity to establish the Arab educational system due to the potentials, it provides, to the widespread use of language with flexibility. The Arabic language is a cultural experience that has accompanied a great civilizational experience in human history. Its meanings and concepts are still urgently waiting to who has the ability to express them in the context of modern technology.

## **Introduction**

The ultimate aim of the human development process is the development of human rights and the continuous expansion of the base of democracy: its values, ideals and society's philosophy towards them. Human rights and democracy are an essential part of every developmental endeavor. Through the accumulation of experiences of nations and countries, we understand today the fact that the failure of development is mainly due to the persistence of political regimes in desperate attempts to reconcile development programs and projects with the absence of democracy. Participation of all is a necessity in the formulation of state decisions, the development of the citizen's sense of the new meanings of freedom and rights, that is, human development in all its dimensions, with its material, spiritual and symbolic levels. Hence, there is an organic and dialectical connection between development projects and their democratic framework and the human need for rights and freedom. To demonstrate this organic correlation, we can cite many examples in the Arab reality and even the rest of the underdeveloped world.

Many areas (private cities) have been subjected to earthquakes, and natural disasters created thousands of victims as well as the destruction of large buildings and heavy losses of funds. The reasons for the heavy losses of funds can not only be blamed on these sources of natural destruction, but also on the absence of democracy, fraud, and suspicious deals which lack transparency, channels of observation and follow-up. If democracy were in place, individuals and institutions would be able to follow development projects from the moment of their conception to the moment of their completion and delivery and be able to intervene when an imbalance occurs and attempts to compromise the terms and conditions of such developments. This raises the question of whether we seek cumulative development based on one another, or on reverse development, which results in a loss, neglect, and collapse, as evidenced by many areas of the Arab world. Moreover, if all this is added to the absence of responsibility and the failure to sanction the doer parties, the development in the Arab world has entered a state of self-erosion, which legitimizes and justifies corruption, resulting in absolute corruption.

Thus, the problematic of development today takes its real elements from the status and state of democracy and the availability of freedom and human rights. Human development is the real test of the evolution of the humanitarian situation towards democracy and the enjoyment of human rights or humanitarian rights. Yes, everything develops and takes on new meanings, including human rights, which are no longer limited to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. Returning to the indicators of gross and individual income and the state of education, many factors appear. The vitality of the prevailing culture, the spirit of tolerance, the respect for the values of religion, the values of the times, the awareness of the value of justice, equality and freedoms at its contemporary climax, and thus, it becomes easy to know whether democracy is prevalent in society or not?

The research includes two themes. The first theme centered on human rights and democracy in the Arab world that includes these topics: the concept of democracy, Christianity and human rights, Arab democracy in the modern history and excessive politics, and finally the crisis of democracy in the Arab world: truth and assumptions. The second theme deals with ways to overcome Arab backwardness that includes these topics: the modern Arab history and attitude toward the self and the other, the distribution of power in the modern Arab countries, the globalization as a context for realizing sustainable development.

## **1. Human Rights and Democracy in the Modern History of the Arab World**

### **a. The Concept of Democracy**

Philosophy is a Greek invention. Democracy is also a Greek innovation. Democracy, like philosophy, took its place in the Greek language and progressed to all languages. The city of Athens was the birthplace of democracy, and it played an active role in the development and maturity of democracy as well as philosophy. As an obvious, manifestation of attachment to its homeland Greek philosophy reached the height of its prosperity under the rule of democracy in Athens (Al-Baz 2004).

The word “democracy” differs from one language to another, but it is mainly derived from the ancient Greek language. It consists of two parts: “Demos” meaning “people” and “Kratos” meaning “rule,” or “authority.” Thus the word becomes “Demoskratos,” meaning “rule of the people” (Nofal, and Al-Zaher 2008). Thus, the term “democracy” is a Greek word that is composed of two words. We note that this word has been borrowed and used in other languages, including Arabic. The word “democracy” is not originally Arabic but borrowed from the ancient Greek language and is used in Arabic studies.

However, if we tackle the definitions presented by jurists for democracy, there is no room for enumeration or limitation, however, we try to classify them into groups that agree or revolve around a certain idea, each of which is being analyzed, discussed and critiqued, in order to arrive

at a comprehensive definition of this idea. Accordingly, we find that the classic definition of democracy is that it is the “rule of the people” or the rule of the people themselves for themselves. In democracy, the executive, legislative, and judicial authority springs from the people. In another definition, it is more abbreviated, known by some as a people’s government by the people. Here it carries the same meaning that was expressed by one of the early presidents of the United States of America, President Abraham Lincoln, who said: “Democracy is the rule of the people by the people and for the people” (Al-Baz 2006, p.196).

It is noteworthy that the previous definitions focus on the fact that people are the source of democracy, and those people exercise democracy in order to achieve their goals. It should be noted that the intention here is the rule of the people: “the people in the political sense” the individuals who meet the qualifications to vote. In developed countries, it is the latter who exercises power in order to achieve goals that belong to the people in political and social terms. However, these classic definitions face some critiques that can be cited as follows:

- A Critique directed to these definitions is that the latter makes the issuance of all laws and decisions on the management of state affairs by the unanimous opinion of citizens (Muhanna 2011, p.112). This speech, although it may seem theory, is practically not applicable, because of the laws and decisions. Besides, this method complicates the length of the procedures for the issuance of any law or decision in the state.
- Despite the recognition of the gravity of these definitions, and because they apply more to real performance, they are not precise definitions as evidenced by the development of new systems and contemporary democratic practices. It is imperfect and is not ideal. Thus, Jean-Jacques Rousseau says in his book, *The Social Contract*, if there were gods to rule themselves, they would rule in a democratic way. This kind of judgment is not right for humans, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his book. This book was written by Rousseau in 1762, at a time when Montesquieu’s theories on the sources of the laws and constitutions that he presented in his book: *The Spirit of the Laws*, Voltaire’s views and the Encyclopedia of France, and before them philosophies of Hobbs and Locke in England, had readied Russo's ideas for rapid development (Al-Makhdmi, 2007, p.19).

Consequently, democracy has not yet reached its ideal goal of “governing the people for the people in the interest of the people” (Al-Baz 2006, p.196). It has not achieved the people’s rule

in the literal sense of the word but is called by the American political theorist, Robert A. Dahl, the regime of pluralism. So, the current democratic practice is only the denial of the absolute rule of the individual, and the rule of oligarchs, and has overcome them to achieve the rule of many, seeking to reach the rule of the people (Al-Makhdmi, 2004, pp.35-6). Therefore, the definition of democracy as the rule of the people by the people and for the people is not truthful. Thus, Rousseau replaced the rule of unanimity with the rule of the majority, and the rule of unanimity, although its application is to ensure respect for individual freedoms, is practically impossible. Therefore, the rule of the majority is acceptable (Muhanna 2011, p.112).

There are those who define democracy by relating the concept of democracy to other concepts, such as elections. Some define it as the political system in which the people take power themselves or through representatives who are chosen directly in general elections in which political forces are organized in the form of parties. A constitution approved by the people in the manner of the popular referendum determines the powers between the authorities. We see that this definition makes democracy a political system, so it is not an economic or social system. The people are in a position of power, but this definition is embedded with the idea that the people have power, through a vote for representatives via the general elections. Thus, critique is avoided in the first definition, which focuses on the unanimity of citizens, which is impossible to implement, by adopting the idea of elections. In addition to the existence of a constitution to be approved by the people, the latter is the legal framework for the exercise of democracy. Others believe that democracy means treating all people on an equal footing. The principle of equality requires not only that government policy respects people's interests on an equal footing, but also their views equally (Shatanaoui 2003, p.138).

#### **b. Christianity and Human Rights**

Before any attempt to study a survey or field survey, it is necessary to look for what has changed in the Arab world. What are the bases and criteria that can be used to measure the amount of change that has happened to our Arab world? What is our relation to our constituents: language, history, religion, destiny, and can we face the fact that a fundamental change has occurred in our contemporary life? A blunt question: what is the impact of historical modernity in our intellectual, political and economic life and our relationship with ourselves and with others? To what extent are the problems of Islam and the West still framing the mentality of the intellectual and the Arab thinker to search for a solution?

Moreover, is the Arab community still looking for someone who will think for it, and take over the government on its behalf? It is not easy to provide a clear and adequate answer to all these questions at once, but we cannot deny the existence of answers in the behavior of the Arab man and the experience of the Arab state in politics, economy, and society. That is because Arab life is full of behaviors, transactions, and what the Jordanian thinker Fahmi Jadaan calls “the critique of the practical mind” (Jadaan 1996, p. 452). The bitter truth is that the Arab researcher no longer cares about the speeches or the rhetorical compositions and the occasional talks that have become the daily factors and an inevitable fate with no escape. Is the focal point in the problem of Arab development that we have not yet succeeded in gathering the elements of the matter because of the paradox of the discourse of reality that nullifies any attempt to resolve it?

In the light of post-independence, we can hardly find a difference in essence that separates completely and definitively with the past, heritage and historical experience, whatever the return to be borne and avoided in the Arab's thinking and his current behavior and in the way he deals with members of the community and with others in the world. The modern Arab state, as it attempts to establish the foundations of civil, political, and economic institutions, demonstrates the structure of the traditional mind and tribal Bedouin behavior, which often clashes with the values of modernity and the spirit of civility that frames society.

The traditional structures and frames are still the major obstacle to any attempt to shift towards democracy and increased human rights. The Arab man, in his relationship with politics and within the framework of the existing Arab state, still reveals gaps and holes that have not yet been met by the demands of democracy. That is, the generality of the interest that is essentially the Republic of the republic publique = république, or the abstract system of the abstract système étatique, which is not accepted by the French philosopher and activist, Claude Lefort, in his book: *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Lefort, and Thompson 2010).

Talking on human rights and democracy is meaningless in the political and economic experience of our Arab world. The reality stands in contrast to what we claim, for the existence of the Arab states and their life depends on the monopolization of right and duty, and that prevents the possibility of investing human rights in the field of experience and the field of conflict with power. Hence the necessity of a return in order to restore the margins lost in the historical experience, because political disputes leading to revolutions and coups should not lead to an



elimination of an entire system encompassing the culture of a whole society and history of institutions. The history of the modern Arab world, especially after the Second World War to this day, is of this type that wastes experience in the sense that mistakes of the past and goes on in its official discourse to obscure and hide it.

Perhaps the most prominent example that exposes the Arab political foundations is based on the experience of overcoming foreign colonialism. However, its contempt for the right to citizenship, responsibility, freedom, and justice, which are the concepts by which a society expresses its vitality and responds accordingly with novelty when it shares power as a vital and existential practice, is detrimental. Thus, in the current modern concept of power in the Arab world, democracy, and human rights cannot flourish, development becomes impossible for it loses its mechanisms (Foucault 2000).

Perhaps the greatest affliction to democracy in the Arab world is the stark contrast between the era of the masses and the continued search for a charismatic political figure or a loyal and savior leader, as well as the ultra-modern era (Harb 2005), which expresses a soft technology and cyberspace, and Tribal Bedouin mentality, which still hold the values of society. Is this contradiction responsible for the intervention of America and Europe in forcing the Arabs to soften their conscience and modernize their minds in order to expand the scope of democracy and human rights, and the development of means and mechanisms of governance in national decision-making? Most Arab countries still suffer from excessive sensitivity to democracy. At the same time, we find that some other Muslim countries have managed to transcend pre-democratic status and achieve levels of comprehensive development that indicate the validity of the right trend and expected promises.<sup>1</sup>

Where they able to do so because they are Arab? Of course not. Modern Arab history is full of images of freedom, independence, dignity and the aspiration to the spirit of the times when the adversary was European and American colonialism and continuing through the stage of the stumble of post-democratic experiences in the Arab world.<sup>2</sup> The beginning of post-democratic

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1- The Islamic countries, Turkey and the Group of Southeast Asian Nations, especially Malaysia. On the question of whether Arabs despise democracy, see the article by French political writer André Fontaine: "The Middle East and Slow Democracy," André fontaine, le moyen orient: la démocratie à petit pas, le monde du 25 mars 2005.

2- Demonstrations by the masses and the Lebanese political class in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri revealed a previous balance of attachment to democracy and freedom that gained from not turning back to the civil war and from its resistance to the Israeli occupation. It is now enough to find a political formula that excludes guardianship and monopolization so that Lebanon can regain its democratic vitality as a society of diversity, creativity, and social hope.

experiences in the Arab world was full of scenes of social will and strong political awareness, as Lebanon's streets were filled with the masses. These scenes must be taken into account when attempting to understand the mechanism of participation in decision making and power sharing in the state.

### **c. Arab Democracy in the Modern History and Excessive Politics**

The Arab region still derives its value and importance from its historical and strategic location, which gives it the status of presence in modern and contemporary international relations. In recent years, after the second Gulf War, they have become a topic on the American agenda, rather than setting their agenda in the Arab League. Perhaps the Greater Middle East project is the culmination of controlling Arab public policy, which proposes, among other things, openness to democracy and how to deal with the superpowers, and, more importantly, how to deal with the Middle East issue: Israel and the Arabs.

All this pressure distracts the attention of the Arab peoples from the internal situation to fill the political, economic and civic cultural gaps: an indispensable condition for creating fertile ground for the growth of democracy and human rights. "Arabs need a free-exchange economy to bridge the unemployment gap, a political system to bridge the gap of freedom, and educational reform," said Colin Powell, the former head of US diplomacy in a speech on 12/12/2002. International politics has dominated the Arab region where people have been dealing with it as an inevitable daily fate that has diverted attention from domestic affairs and has thus wasted opportunity to consciously evoke the problems of development concerning democracy and human rights. The concern that arises is that the enormous flow of reform projects directed by America, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as Arab opposition statements to Arab leaders, has become a large pile of documents today, the majority of which have entered the archives due to lack of implementation and application. Are there contradictions or incompatibility between American interests and Arab democracy? To what extent can there be an Arab democracy that cares and responds to American interests? Perhaps this central question is worth putting forward because it encompasses the whole issue in that it calls upon all the parties present in the region. In the past, American politics were rarely a part of the Arab world because its interests were passing through regimes who were distanced from the interests of the Arab majority. The US administration has been aware of the adverse effects that totalitarian and reactionary regimes may have inside and outside of the Arab region, such as the adverse effects

that are borne of al-Qaeda from the Saudi-Wahhabi regime. This has necessitated a close follow-up on the Middle East region, an expansion of interest in educational programs, civil society, and the private sector, as well as human rights, and facilitation of democracy and transparency in investigation and litigation.

The critique that can be directed at American foreign policy is that it is overly nostalgic about Israel, despite the changing situation in terms of other interests, including the Arab interests under democratic conditions based on the foundations of modernity in the political and educational systems. America has failed to adapt to the new realities of the Arabs and the Middle East and has not known how to create alternatives to its pretensions to Israel, especially after the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt in 1978. Thirty years of maneuvering in the square absolutely pro-Israel, and only the major event of 11 September 2001, has precluded it. This caused urged America to pay a great deal of attention to the Arab and Islamic region, not only in their relations with American interests, but also with needs of the modern era and the context of globalization, the dissemination of human rights, democracy, the values of science and technology, and respect for the identities and cultures and religious and civilizational characteristics in the world.

The American strategy has been based on the search for means to extend and secure its interests regardless of the realities of geography, Arab and Islamic history, and the context of the inter-world relations. The time has come to include in the American strategy foreign policy the interests of the Arabs in their relationship to good political governance, efficient economy and development. The contemporary world no longer has independent units and does not bear isolationism. Instead, all civilizational, political and economic units act and move in intersecting circles to achieve common interests based on interrelationship and interaction. Perhaps this fact has become known and practiced at a level in nations and major countries to the point of feeling an inevitability and perhaps coercion in some areas that refuse to allow democracy and transparency in both domestic and foreign policy. The Greater Middle East Reform Project, as endorsed by the Group of Big States, is an example of the destiny leading to the current situation in the Arab region. Due to the loss of Arab self-initiative, which in times of crisis and difficulties it cannot solve the problems with individual effort, which led to the intervention of the initiatives of foreign countries, especially the United States of America.

The Middle East Reform Project, from the outset, emphasizes the strong link between the Arab region and the international community, starting with the document. The Greater Middle East

presents a unique challenge and opportunity for the international community. The three shortcomings identified by the Arab writers who contributed to the 2003/2003 UN Arab Development Report were freedom, knowledge, and empowerment of women. These shortcomings create conditions that threaten the national interests of all members of the Group of Eight. The project then lists some facts that illustrate the terrible backwardness of Arab societies: Statistics show that the region stands at the crossroads. The greater Middle East can continue on the same path, adding more young people who lack decent levels of work and learning and are deprived of their political rights every year.

That will be a direct threat to the stability of the region and the common interests of the eight members. All this is a clear indication of the Arabs' inability to create the cornerstone of government and management of the economy and is also an indication of intellectual backwardness and the inability to identify the right elements of sustainable development. That means the potential and self-ability, as well as natural, moral and symbolic behaviors all, need to be invested in, in order to combine and intersect in interrelationships and respond in a harmonious way. This formula represents the moment of convergence of the entity of society with itself, in which the means of achieving its projects and programs are gathered and thus legitimizes the linking of ends with their means of implementation.

The Arab world needs today, in order to legitimize the achievement of human development, to attach itself to procedural concepts and to political and intellectual discourse rather than which prevailed during and after colonial times. That led to the following great paradox: How can development be achieved by the ideological discourse of enmity to the great powers of the world? Because of the excessive longing for national discourse and unity, and the national tendency toward a lack of context and its implications, the Arabs failed in the reform project, the greatest project thus far exemplifying cooperation with Arab opposition and opponents of its regimes.

#### **d. The Crisis of Democracy in the Arab World: Truth and Assumptions**

In the Arab world, there has been a considerable amount of time spent discussing the crisis of democracy; the discourse has been ongoing since the 1980s,<sup>3</sup> with the only result being the difference in the rhetoric used. The ultimate reflection at the end of an analysis regarding the

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3- See, for example, what has changed from the description and solutions presented to the crisis of democracy (absence of democracy) since the 1980s, when the Center for Arab Unity Studies held its national conference in Cyprus under the title "The Crisis of Democracy in the Arab World." Beirut. 1984.

Arab's inability to achieve democracy is this: The Arab man has become immune to the awareness of freedom and right, and to democracy as a way of life and engagement in the context of modernity. That may give a pretext to the Arab regimes of the reason for their delay and their reluctance to open the field of public freedoms and expand the participation of individuals in the formulation of political decision. Another reason for the hesitation to make the way for public freedoms may be the fact that the equitable distribution of the nation's wealth and efforts through the criteria of eligibility of investment projects and moral and public capital, as well as all components of state and society, must be open to the public.

Is the Arab situation always perpetuated by the absence of democracy,<sup>4</sup> and the inability to achieve it? If, up until the 1980s, this question could be answered with a "yes," then this is no longer the case, due to the changing of world factors and geopolitical data in the Arab region. At the world level, America alone is no longer the center of political and economic weight in the world, despite the idea that it was unique and privileged in the world. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, and because of September 11, 2001, America vowed to fight international terrorism and is forced to pay a great deal of attention and importance to other world partners in its administration and formulation of a policy of peace and security. Today's America, post-Iraq war, needs the world, rather than being needed by the world. It pays a high price due to the violation of international legitimacy every time it makes individual, fateful decisions which are not in conjunction with the Security Council. This is very much what the French thinker, Emmanuel Todd, calls post-empire, in his book: *After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order*. Todd manages the affairs of the world and forces the opponents of international and national law to comply with the law and punish war criminals against humanity.

In addition to the current qualitative data at the international level, the growth of centers other than the US, such as United Europe, China, Japan, and India, will fundamentally change the development indicators in the Arab world. We are witnessing huge Asian production in the Arab region, from clothing to the latest technological and electronic industries. Political geopolitics in the Arab region have also changed, although regimes still exist in post-independence reality, the time of nationalism and unity, and the ruling families. After the liberation of Kuwait, the period

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4- On the reasons for the absence of democracy in Arab society, the state and the party, see Nouredine Thaneau, "Political Parties in Algeria and the Democratic Experience in Democracy." *Political Parties in the Arab Countries Symposium*. Center for Arab Unity Studies. Beirut. 2004.

became known as the new international order, when more than 60 countries represented international forces to legitimize an international intervention in the Arab region.

One fact that must not be forgotten because it is derived from modern Arab history and represents the central manifestation of the crisis is the absence of authorities and references from the texts of heritage and the recent effort of modern jurisprudence on the establishment of the system of government. All the charters and constitutions that have formulated the political, economic and social systems of the Arab system have not referred to certain models of their own history, whether they are from Islam or the historical heritage. All this is the continuation of an attempt to create a synthesis of elements that are not homogenous with the modern state. The motivating energy of the Arab state has become all about the resistance to colonialism and its repercussions, and it has not gone beyond that, to the liberating of new spaces, areas, and requirements that accompany the establishment of a democratic state.

The current Arab regimes, aim intentionally to seize the political life and reduce it to the extent of authority with the state and society and leave no room for political action from outside the Authority and its apparatuses. That leads to the disruption of the emergence of new meanings in the modern political dictionary in the Middle Eastern context and perhaps adds to the dilemma of democracy, ambiguity, and confusion in the mind of the Arab citizen. When the Arab citizen lives amongst this ambiguity, while observing democracy in the Western context, he begins to question how human rights have improved in the West and yet are absent in his society? The Arab citizen often has to migrate in order to benefit from democracy.

The power of democracy awakens us to aspects of deprivation in the conscious, the mind and the Arab spirit. Freedom and democracy were a safety valve for legitimate demands accompanied by the national movements and deserved independence from the Ottoman Empire and then from European colonialism. But today, after decades of national rule and the elimination of the realities of democracy and human rights in their relationship with human development the interest in the healthy development of democracy in Arab society has shifted its attention about how to disengage the Arab system and democratic life as the best path for lasting development. In a way that chronicles the history of the Arab man and his society and state.

From the core of this monotonous Arab system, the radical Islamic movements of protesting have emerged as a continuation of the resistance pattern of the nationalist movements. The Salafist movements are based on anti-authority in their interpretation of the religious texts and

their reading of history and thus declare their existence of the state as the best way to eliminate it. Moreover, with the emergence of Islamic protest movements, the question of development by the mechanisms and concepts of democracy and human rights has been suspended, and the conflict between the Arab Authority and extremist groups occupy almost the whole political scene. At the same time, it points of the era of nationalism, Arabism and socialism, which frame the political elite and the Arab intellectuals in the post-independence phase who failed to convey the meaning of the state.

Democracy and human rights, media, religion and science, politics, economics, and society are modern concepts. The Arab system fails to achieve the modern meaning of such and relate these concepts to the conscience of society and its members as a pillar of any future building. This gap caused by this failure has given way to extremist religious groups to try to fill the void. Therefore, the majority of national movements lack the historical reference and the absence of main texts to support the building of democracies in the Arab world. Referring to the Islamic trend was a retreat from reality and rebellion against it and a desperate attempt to collect contradictions as a means to justify that rebellion.

## **2. Ways to Overcome Arab Backwardness**

### **a. A Modern Arab History and Attitude Toward the Self and the Other**

The search for a solution to a problem, especially if it is a civilizational problem such as the absence of democracy and human rights in the Arab world, requires not only reconsidering our attitude towards the other but also in the way requires not only considering our attitude towards others but also requires an evaluation of self-conduct. After the decline of colonialism, which was another dynamic in the problem of development and advancement, it was found that the imbalance is also inherent in the process of dealing with influential international forces, modern science, and the realities of modern and contemporary history. The West was not only colonial but also influenced the Arab civilization, culture, thought, and science. This began during the modern Arab Renaissance, with Napoleon's campaign on Egypt (1798-1802), and later on, it was founded by Muhammad Ali in the construction of his state (1805-1840), especially after the return of scientific missions that paved the way for a new vision from the East to the West. The relationship between the Arabs and the West was strained after the First World War after colonial policy dominated the West's actions towards Arabs and Muslims. Because of the strong capitalist tide, colonialism was

not confined to only the Arab nation but too many other parts of the world. Some regions have gained benefit from it and others not, including Arabs, who confused Western civilization and colonialism. The war against it became comprehensive: civilization, values, culture, and politics.

This was not true at all because a large part of the Arab nationalist movement, such as the Algerian national movement, was framed by the French, English, and American liberal principles, concepts, and ideas. The West provided a culture against the colonial West itself; the great revolution that happened in European nations were against corrupt forms of government and injustice. Therefore, the new relationship that must prevail between the Arabs and the West must include a reconsideration regarding the legacy of enmity, discord, and colonialism, as well as its opposition to a new vision that takes into account the great presence of Western products in our Arab world, which needs rationalization. What can result from this new situation is the cessation of anti-Western culture and its followers in the Arab world, because the anti-discourse is an anti-ideological discourse, self-entrenched, being used during the time of searching for ways to access power after independence as well as ways to continue to govern and retain it. The revolutionary, national and then Islamic rhetoric discourse has diminished, and the West is increasing progress and widening the gap between it and the Arabs and Muslims. The rhetoric of the anti-discourse is no longer useful as long as Western culture achieves more rights and liberties daily, opening spaces and liberating areas for the application of democracy and facilitating the direct management of public affairs. The juxtaposition is how to counteract the culture and its Arab and Muslim followers.

This should not be understood as peace with colonialism and acceptance of current international politics, to the extent that one can say that we must overcome the state of confusion that is necessary for the Arab rulers when they find in the anti-West a cover for covering up the bankruptcy of their economic projects and politics. Besides, they are being in a state of loathing if they are the narrowing of the horizon that usually ended with coups or assassinations. For instance, the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, the assassination of Mohammed Boudiaf 1992, or the entry into destructive civil wars. The Lebanese Civil War 1975-1991, the Algerian after the repeal of the 1992 legislative elections, and what is happening in Iraq, which was in a sectarian civil war after 2003. All these are the result of the absence of explicit relations with the actors in society as well as the corruption relationship with the other the foreign.



In this case, the institutions of the state and the society should be left to those who are better and more capable through sharing of roles and functions according to the readiness and cooperation within the framework of protecting the major interests of the national state and the international community. Thus, the absence of a state of full awareness of public rights and duties towards the state of institutions is responsible for the loss of unfinished reform projects. Perhaps in this analysis, we also reveal why the Arab state has not moved from the state of individuals to the state of institutions.

#### **b. The Distribution of Power in the Modern Arab State**

Lethargy is not an intractable situation, nor is it an inherent crisis in human beings. Arabs, like all other peoples of the world, can escape from backwardness and transcend the conditions of the general situation because they do not carry the seeds of underdevelopment in their conscience, but do have the ability to self-reflect and achieve positive interaction in the contemporary context. A hesitancy to progress is not a biological condition. This hesitancy characterizes the reality of contemporary Arab life, and it is to be expected that all the “justifications” for such backwardness that has been adopted by Arab regimes in recent decades (such as the remnants of colonialism and international relations that are unfair to Arabs), as well as the situation with the State of Israel, the conditions of the World Bank, the Arab Trade Organization, and religious and political terrorism, will continue to be used. All countries, whether regional, continental or even national, are always called upon to crystallize a foreign policy that meets the fate of the world and the destiny of humanity in terms of security and peace, avoiding the causes of tension and resolving disputes through political and peaceful means. After it was confirmed that war had become a means of history-driven practices such as racism and slavery, the reality of the situation clearly reveals that a war in the societies of advanced knowledge is almost impossible.

The Arabs, with their own constituents (civilization, religion, history, language), can overcome the threshold of backwardness if they appreciate the realities of the high technological era and the requirements of the modern state and its conditions that require the participation of individuals and groups in the management of public and private affairs. In modern Arab times, the institutions were the monopoly of the men of power, and power was a privilege that reflected the interests of the rulers. Moreover, because the requirements of running the affairs of the world are no longer only left to the national systems, it must accelerate the distribution of power to the

chambers of expertise, know-how, professionalism, prestige, and influence and those who have a balance in the physical, moral, and symbolic capital in the community, state, and abroad. Also, the distribution of power must be accelerated in order to take their place in the desired comprehensive development programs through the mechanisms of trade unions, associations, clubs, the press, and the media, commercial, industrial and financial companies all contribute to the life of the state. By expressing the Arab world sense of responsibility and participating in national decision-making, sustainable development will grow when the individual and the group are aware of and conscious of their characteristics and are responsible for the future of the country and the world from the potential of their natural, historical, cultural, and educational aspects.

Indeed, the diverse requirements for sustainable development and the steady emergence of new spaces and specialties reflect the state of diversity and pluralism in society. Common denominators for all must be the values and virtues as to the value of water, air, land, plants, animals, space, spiritual and moral aspects of society, as well as its educational and religious characteristics, style and cultural life, which requires understanding and knowledge the following facts: diversity and multiculturalism of civilizations and ways of coexistence today. The diversity of the ecological environment in the world, its natural resources and resources, the historical relations between the ecological environment in the world, the development of human societies, the maintenance of monuments and historical exploits, and the guardianship of all attempts to violate and attack nature from the evils of man and society.

### **c. Globalization: Context for Realizing Development**

Globalization, unlike what is being talked about in the Arab world, and unlike the prevailing opinion among intellectuals, in particular, is not an absolute evil and is not an impediment to development, because development in the Arab world has not yet been achieved, and therefore the discourse around it is meaningless. In societies like China (a comprehensively communist country), who adapted to globalization in its economic and technological expressions, we see the demonstration of the ability to move from one age to another by the investing of resources toward the process of globalization. Globalization has led, among other things, to a state of active development. China has become a world player. One of the hallmarks of this transformation is the escape of one hundred and fifty million Chinese from poverty, the explosion of its products from clothing to electronic industries, almost all of the world.

The Arab world, therefore, can progress further if its structure is liberated and independent of the ruling political authorities who oppose globalization in their discourse yet benefit from it in their projects and policies. The world of the internet, satellite channels, and non-material power enable the masses to escape from the national borders to external worlds and express their opinion and way of life through platforms outside, aiming to reach a voice to the whole world, reducing the time and geographical distance, not leaving margins of power to a chance to falsify. The Arab world has always lagged in the area of global outreach with its modern expressions and manifestations. Today, the Arab world has had to adjust its new relations within the context of globalization because of its abstract and universal potential for all humankind, thus enabling it to achieve tremendous human development on the foundations self-inherited from a previous Arab Islamic civilization. The Arab world is more clearly aware of a state of helplessness as the realization of globalization as a rapid historical movement presents a need for adaptation, and motivates the Arab world to emerge from backwardness.

All Arab countries, in order to succeed in human and sustainable development, are called upon to realize all the motivations for collaborating with knowledgeable and active societies. Civil society in the modern world has more than one task, achieves more than one job, and confers more democracy on the state. Moreover, it is impossible to talk about political and social democracy other than in the presence of civil societies where the level of knowledge has increased. It is necessary to have a relationship with international organizations and institutions to understand what is working and to aspire to the unity of destiny. Moreover, the values of beauty, goodness, peace, health, and human power must be held by all and demonstrate the common interest and commitment to the minimum cultural and civilized level, the collective rejection of the meanings of war, poverty, danger, and tyranny. Thus, the countries of the Arab world, as they are in the rest of the world, are required to reach knowledge societies,<sup>5</sup> because they are more abstract and more responsive to the man who deals with the techniques of communication and the quality of knowledge. And who is no longer a prisoner of radical ideologies and extremist and racist discourses? A more knowledgeable society is in itself an acknowledgment of the state's inability to manage monopolization of all institutions within the country and thus release of the state's hand

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5- "The knowledge society is specifically defined as a society based primarily on the dissemination, production and efficient use of knowledge in all spheres of social activity: the economy, civil society, politics and private life, and the progressive promotion of the human condition." The Human Development Report in the Arab Countries, 2003.

from large areas that belong to civil society. The private sector is overproduced in developed societies and has been performing social and civic functions and doing charitable works. Today, in some Arab societies, private money can provide a social and economic role that is effective and instrumental if it is based on laws, regulations, in which facilitate the mechanisms of restoring the right and challenging the unjust.

A softening of the relations with the public sector needs to happen as well because one of the conditions of a demanding society is a healthy and active community which is supported by a willingness and ability to allocate the necessary resources and sustained social processes in an effort to disseminate and produce knowledge. It is clear that a knowledgeable society is a society based primarily on the ability to produce facts, tables, figures, statistics and data that follow its development from within and in relation to abroad. It thus indicates the real situation of these Arab societies, which have long suffered from a reporting of false numbers. The immediacy of knowledge offered by the age of high technology provides a great potential to overcome the Bedouin logic and behavior, which stands in opposition and is incompatible with the logic of modernity and beyond. As a result, the Arab man may be made free from the repressive state apparatuses.

## **Conclusion**

Knowledge is a knowledge of the realities of the homeland and the Arab human being and based on it are the manufacture and formulation of decisions and need, among other dynamics. The need to be accurate in dealing with this data is crucial because the same knowledge is available in scientific centers and societies abroad. The knowledgeable society in the Arab countries is open and transparent, exposing its worst if it tries to break through and violate the law, order and healthy behavior, as is happening today in the Arab countries of Iraq, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan. The times we live in today are times of constant aspiration to acquire knowledge, that is, the power of readiness to receive, search for, and retrieve knowledge when necessary. Developed countries have developed so much so that they control an enormous amount of information and have already reached the level of a “knowledgeable society” (they have access to knowledge capital and have the ability to respond to developmental projects). On this basis, the Arab nation citizen needs to re-raise the question of the Arabic language in light of the desire of the knowledge society, which requires the re-examination of the foundations of the mechanisms of knowledge production. What

has been observed in recent decades is that the Arab effort in the field of Arabic language is widely dispersed and has not continued with the nineteenth century when the pioneers of the Arab Renaissance began to prepare for the age of modernity. Improving the Arabic language and modernizing its rules and trying to elevate it as a language of communication in Arab societies and it is a hard task for society. It has the capacity of creativity, scientific and political creation and expression, the refinement of spoken languages, and the assimilation of the foreign term. Thus, the preparation for the knowledge society, as imposed by the twenty-first century, essentially requires the promotion of the Arabic language and its conformity with the globalized global context as the best and most powerful way to attend to the Arab society.

As long as the knowledge society is distinguished by language, the latter must be upscale, decent and fair for Arab people to recognize themselves, not what the media tells them, and what they translate about the lives, experiences, and history of others. Globalization is a very powerful opportunity for the Arab knowledge society to provide it with the possibilities of using the language on a wide scale and to give it flexibility and efficiency. The Arabic language accumulated great civilizational experience in human history, whose meanings, concepts and meanings continue to motivate those who have the ability to sense and express themselves in the context of the high technological era.

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