

Possibility of attaining a democracy in the middle east research paper

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



This paper aims to assert the reasons for the problematic transition into democracy in Middle Eastern countries. It will give a brief introduction to the political history of the region and better assessment of the system that Syria currently uses.

Secondly, it will address the attempts made by the United States in expanding democracy and heavily emphasizing it in this region. The analysis of the Arab Spring, its evolution and its outcomes, will be vital in understanding the challenges that introduction of a new ideology has created.

Ultimately, this paper will demonstrate why the current structure of the Middle East politically, socially, and structurally, will not sustain a democracy in the near future taking Syria as an example.

Several countries in the Middle East such as Syria, Yemen, and Iraq experienced conflicts that have lasted for more than a decade. These conflicts are a result of weak democratic institutions or a complete degeneration of these structures.

For instance, in Syria, the democratic institution has been abused by different regimes due to the dynamic nature of that society (Akerlof & Chaney 2012).

In fact, the current president is in power for more than two decades and has never adopted an election system that can be described as free and fair since those who are supposed to implement control and supervision are

executed, deported, or intimidated by the state machinery (Akerlof & Chaney 2012).

Therefore, there is need to explore the possibility of attaining democracy and its challenges in Syria to design policies that can reverse the trend mentioned above.

In order to understand the underlying facts of the research paper, the research question will be:

The research objectives are summarised as:

For the purposes of this paper, I will use several types of sources ranging from the Internet to articles and personal interviews. For the history and background on the Middle Eastern governments, I will rely mostly on written material.

In analysing a more recent history, mainly the Arab Spring, I will use both written material and personal accounts that will be gathered through the interviews. Lastly, my focus on the challenges connected with democracy establishment in the region will be taken from mostly written sources.

Think-tanks and other institutions have various reports that provide analysis of the aspects of Middle Eastern countries which are deemed problematic to western values; these reports will assist me in developing my argument.

The mixture of questionnaire and direct interview will present a number of pre-specified competencies and best practices based on the research topic.

The researcher chose the qualitative approach because the scope of the research is focused, subjective, dynamic, and discovery oriented.

Moreover, this approach will create room for further analysis using different and divergent tools for checking the degree of error and assumption limits (Groves, Fowler, Coper, Lepkowski, Singer, & Tourangeau 2009).

This research will target 50 online respondents for Syria to establish the common perception towards the reasons for the current undemocratic system in Syria. The sampling criterion that will be used in the initial sampling plan represents the true picture of the activities on the ground.

The collected qualitative data will be coded and tested with the help of appropriate analysis tools. In the process, cross tabulation will be used to compare and contrast impressions held by the respondents on the state of democracy in Syria.

In order to quantify the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, analysis besides figures, charts, and tabular representation of correlation analysis will be implemented (De-Rada 2005).

The sample of 50 respondents was chosen for the survey to present a clear, scientific, and verifiable criterion for systematic analysis. Reflectively, this enables to hold a comparative research, especially when qualitative design is adopted to give room for testing accuracy and degree of bias (Groves et al. 2009).

The online interviews will be conducted by the researcher because of common characteristics of culture, age, and country (George & Bennet 2005).

The researcher will email the questionnaires to the targeted participants and schedule Skype interview with those who are flexible and can afford a fifteen minutes break to answer the interview questions.

Understanding geo-political, social, and economic dynamics in the Middle East, especially in Syria, is important in relating to the perceived ideology that has become an impediment to democratic governance. This research is be significant in establishing the contribution of the non-democratic ideology in the current conflict in Syria.

Through social imagination, behaviour change is easy to understand and forces are easy to identify: positive or negative, it facilitates non-democratic tendencies in order to create alternative approaches to possible democratic governance in Syria and other countries in the Middle East that are currently controlled by undemocratic governments.

Many obstacles stand in the way between the current ideological stand of the Middle East and the attainment of democracy that reflects values of a free society.

The idea of a social order, in which infringements on the inherent rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” are forbidden, is a concept that the

United States attempts to disseminate on the Middle East for the past couple of decades (Hamid 2011, p. 46).

Through vast amounts of money and assistance, referred to as “ democracy aid” (Toensing 2009, p. 79), the United States attempted to use the funding as a means to establish and sustain institutions that promote democracy, both as a way of spreading the values prominent to the American ideal and for hindering the abilities of the region to harbour terrorism (Stewart 2005).

The fall of communism and the successes thereafter that assisted the nation’s growth and development, led America to become a prominent world power. They began to see democracy as “ the final form of human government” (Tessler 2002, p. 38).

This premise became the perpetual reformation of their foreign policy, focused on the proliferation of democracy to the rest of the world. During the years leading to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, it was clear that the Middle East’s ideologies were adjacent to American values and could become threatening (Grappo 2013).

After the attacks, foreign policy strategies shifted and targeted the cruelty and unjust practices that were occurring throughout the region under oppressive dictatorships.

Later, with the United States’ presence in Iraq, surrounding countries witnessed the assistance that America provided countries that relied on foreign powers in transition to democracy; although the effects of this

transformation proved to be brutal, promises of a western ideology had never been more appealing (Chaney 2012).

This ultimately led to the first spark of the Arab Spring.

The Arab Spring instigated a movement that promised a better and more egalitarian future for Arab citizens in their respective countries (Lea 2011).

People rose in favour of a new government that would reflect their newfound realizations of electing their leaders and ultimately governing themselves. Demonstrations took place throughout the region and the most successful proved to be held in Tunisia and the key countries like Egypt, Libya, and Syria (Calabresi 2011).

The oil-rich countries generally stayed out of the conflicts, and some demonstrations were quieted after the ruling elite promised more state jobs and government assistance (Lea 2011). The remaining countries were either left in a continuing turmoil that is still going on or was suppressed by the relentless rulers.

This movement has left many questions about the extent to which democracy could be practiced in the region, especially in Syria, where this new system lasted less than a year. This is a clear example of the wariness to further promote a democracy in the Middle East (Carapico 2002).

The structure of basic societal norms and customs in Syria greatly inhibits the extent to which the system promoting freedom and equality as its main pillars can be practiced (Calabresi 2011).

The Middle Eastern societies inhibit particular groups of people from sharing the same privileges as others, reduce the importance of education to a secondary level, and have intertwined Islam with their governments, which create preference for one religion over the others.

Although types of democracy vary around the world, no existing democratic institution excludes members of their citizenry or uses other means to hinder them from participating in government (Akerlof & Chaney 2012). When such practices are essential in the Middle Eastern culture, democracy will not function.

In the years following the incidents of September 11th, it seemed that the only outlet for preventing another terrorist attack would be to target the regime of the provokers. This method would alter the region and ultimately de-radicalise extremists, since their theories did not correspond with the proposed structure of democracy.

It is important to understand rationality behind this argument as well as recognize that restructuring of a system synonymous with Islam, could not be done simply by adding democracy.

By detailing the consequences of this wasted effort, foreign powers can alter the course of action to a more sensible approach which will become a rational one and can persevere realities of the country.

In the data collection phase of this study, the researcher will strive to uphold ethics appertaining to scientific research. This will be pursued by including

an informed consent form in the interview and questionnaire, which units are being studied.

The interviewee will be required to read and consent to terms before the study is commenced (Miller, Mauthner, Birch, & Jessop 2012).

The researcher will ensure the confidentiality of the subjects by insisting on their anonymity, where each subject will be identified using a unique code as opposed to use of names (Blaxter, Hughes, & Malcolm 2005).

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