**FOUR DEMOCRATIZATION MYTHS:**
**A CASE STUDY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Assel Tutumlu

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Editors:

Asst. Prof. Mustafa Çıraklı (Acting Director, Near East Institute)
Ercan Çitlioğlu (Chief Consultant, Near East Institute)

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# FOUR DEMOCRATIZATION MYTHS: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNITED NATIONS[1]

**Abstract:**[2]

This report evaluates the democratization efforts of the United Nations by highlighting five myths of this process. Drawing on the myths originally identified by Susan Marks[3] and expanded by Tutumlu[4], this report shows that democratization is a highly political process. Specifically, the author shows that United Nations suffers from the *Myth of Presumptive Universality* which presumes that democracy, despite its different interpretations, is an essential good wanted by everyone in the world. It also shows that the UN discourse suffers from the *Myth of Deep Roots*, which assumes that democracy has had a relative long history. However, the United Nations adopted democratization policies relatively late, mostly in the form of the electoral assistance in the 1990s. UN assumes that given a chance, people will choose democracy over other forms of governance, so UN portrays its role as apolitical aimed only to strengthen grass roots efforts. However, such *Myth of No Politics* hides the fact that democratization efforts are highly political, starting from the banal choice of partners and organizations, which the UN is prepared to recognize. UN also buys into the *Myth of the Dangerous Dark* assuming that only dictators are perpetuating crimes under the veil of darkness without criticizing the system, which brought them in the first place. The report relies on the personal experience of working at the United Nations as well as the analysis of various documents produced by the international organization on this matter.

**Türkçe Özet:**

Bu rapor, Birleşmiş Milletlerin (BM) demokratikleşme çabalarını, bu sürecin beş mitini vurgulayarak değerlendirmektedir. Susan Marks[5] tarafından tanımlanan ve Tutumlu[6] tarafından genişletilen mitler, demokratikleşmenin oldukça politik bir süreç olduğunu gösterir. Yazar, Birleşmiş Milletler'in demokrasinin dünyadaki herkes tarafından arzulanan

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önemli bir iyilik olduğunu öne süren; 'evrensellik' miti'nden muzdarip olduğunu özellikle vurgulanmaktadır. BM söyleminin ayrıca 'derin kökler' miti üzerinden, yani demokrasinin uzun bir tarihe sahip olduğu varsayımı üzerinden şekillendiğinin de gösterildiği raporda, demokrasi terimine 1948'de İnsan Hakları Evrensel Beyannamesi'nde yer verilmesine rağmen BM'nin konuyu ancak 1991'deki seçim yardımı çabaları ile takip ettiği savunulmaktadır. Rapora konu olan bir diğer mit ise BM tarafından benimsenen ve özünde insanların bir şans verildiğinde diğer yönetişim biçimleri yerine demokrasiyi tercih edecekleri savı ve bu doğrultuda BM'nin kendine biçtiği sözde apolitik ve sadece yerel aktörleri güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan roldür. Ne var ki, bu 'apolitik' rol ve 'yansızlık' miti, BM'nin demokratikleşme çabalarının — bu çabaları birlikte yürüttüğü ortaklıkların tercihi dahil — aslında son derece politik olduğu gerçeğini gizlemektedir. BM, aynı zamanda, sadece diktatörlerin karanlığın perdesi arkasında işledikleri suçları eleştirirken onları oraya getiren sistemi eleştirmemekle, demokrasiyi 'tehlikeli karanlık' miti üzerinden tahayyül etmektedir. Rapor, yazarın Birleşmiş Milletler'de görev yaptığı süre boyunca elde etmiş olduğu izlenimlere ve çeşitli BM belgelerinin analizine dayanmaktadır.

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**FOUR DEMOCRATIZATION MYTHS: CASE STUDY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

*Democracy is far more than the holding of a transitional post-conflict election. It is the building of a political system that has to survive the inevitable manipulation from insiders, the necessary alternation among power holders, and the attempts at usurpation by ambitious groups.*
*It is a political system that must surmount the disappointment of defeated candidates, the continuing despair of marginalized communities, and the exasperation of the intelligentsia with the slow pace of reform.*
*Democracy is both a system of working institutions and a viable political culture.*
*Both aspects need time to establish themselves profoundly in any polity.*
*The amount of time needed for such profound change cannot be measured in a financial year, a mandate period, or even five-year plan. It is generational.*[7]

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to analyze the way multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations, think about democratization, as a doctrine of political transformation that is based on free and fair elections and government accountable to people. Specifically, this report argues that despite optimistic expectations over the role of multilateral organizations in domestic democratization processes [8] the UN efforts to promote democracy are problematic, because they are based on several myths that need to be unveiled before democratization policies can become sustainable. The argument was inspired by the readings of "Human Rights and Social Justice Stream" of the Institute of Global Law and Policy within Harvard University Law School. The original workshop paper, written by Susan Marks argued that our analysis of human rights is tainted by four major myths.[9] I would like to argue that the same myths can be attributed to the way we think about global efforts towards democratization by multilateral organizations (MLOs), such as the United Nations. This report recognizes the value of the ongoing work in the area of democratization, but also notes that the current strategies and approaches are not effective.

Although the first three myths were not identified by Marks, nonetheless, she augments the arguments of the three scholars and adds a fourth myth to the table. The first myth, the myth of presumptive universality was initially developed by Joseph Raz, who argued that

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[7] Roland Rich and Edward Newman, *The UN Role in Promoting Democracy: Between Ideals and Realty*, Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 2004, p. 21.
[8] Robert Keohane, Stephen Macedo and Andrew Moravcsik, "Democracy-Enhancing Multilateralism", *International Organization*, Vol 63, 2009, pp. 1–31.
[9] Susan Marks, 2012, op.cit.

human rights activists think that everyone desires human rights and once the rights are declared, they somehow become real. However, Raz claimed that without enforcement, rights do not exist.[10] In addition, different communities may not choose human rights as their most pertinent problem, they might choose poverty, lack of access to drinking water, health facilities, etc. Raz further shows that blind belief in the universality of human rights is internally flawed. The second myth — the myth of 'deep roots' —was identified by Samuel Moyn, who dispels the myth that human rights have a long history.[11] Instead, he argues that human rights started to gain traction only after 1975 and they were informed by the strong competition with the Soviet Union. In order to juxtapose the ideals of social justice, the West began to be concerned with human rights.[12] In the same fashion, Moyn goes on to argue that pragmatically, human rights were created as a minimalist utopia, a goal that can never be fully achieved. This utopia trumped other alternatives for global world order in the context of Cold War. The third myth, the myth of no politics, comes from Wendy Brown. Brown denies the fact that human rights are the 'pure defense of innocent and powerless against power'.[13] But human rights activism itself is an alternative power, which casts the struggle for human rights in an anti-political form of subjectivity. The last myth that Marks adds is the myth of the dangerous dark. For Marks, we assume that human rights violations happen under the cover of darkness, behind closed doors of prisons and walls with torture, abuse and death invisible to cameras of the CCTV.[14] Instead, Marks calls us to reconsider the language we are using. Human rights rhetoric "sweep[s] the systemic basis of inequality under the carpet".[15] By turning a blind eye to the reasons that turn human rights into moral utopias never achievable in practice, we fail to develop a language that distinguishes between "night-time robbery" of secret services that imprison and torture people and 'day-time robbery' of businesses that lobby preferred political outcomes at the expense of the basic rights of people. In other words, Marks points out that we cannot distinguish the difference between illegal practices against the rights of people and practices that violate the rights of people legally.

This report aims to show that similar myths apply to the way we think about democracy and democracy promotion by the multilateral organizations. MLOs share the myth of presumptive universality and assume that everyone wants democracy. If people outwardly reject democracy, as Islamic State did, countries mobilize in the words of the former US

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[10] Joseph Raz, "Human Rights in the Emerging World Order", *Transnational Legal Theory*, Vol 1, 2010, pp. 31-47.

[11] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge, Belknap Press, 2012.

[12] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[13] Wendy Brown, ''The Most We Can Hope For ...': Human Rights and the Politics of Fatalism", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol 103, 2004, p. 453.

[14] Susan Marks, 2012, op.cit., p. 13.

[15] Ibid.

President George Bush to "end the tyranny[16]. Dictators, to avoid the prospect of military intervention and international sanctions, adopt minimalist definitions of democracy. Dobson noted in "Dictators' learning curve" a number of terms that appeared in the vocabulary of non-democratic leaders blurring the distinction between 'real' and 'fake' democracies.[17] In addition, the first myth has been tarnished by the Chinese experience. China illustrated that market economies do not have to be democratic. The second myth of deep roots when applied to democratization policies exposes our failure to understand that democratization by MLOs has a relatively short and highly political history behind the process. Rather than assuming an unimpeded evolution of democracy as the oldest form of government that was initially created in Ancient Greece and preserved today, we need to look at different forms of democratic governance as separate entities to understand the deeper politics of such organization. Present-day democracy is different and incompatible with practices in Ancient Greece or post-French Revolution. Moreover, democratization, understood as a process of regime change followed by free and fair elections became a dominant international practice only during the Cold War. Democratization was a prerogative of the Western World and the US, in particular, which changed political regimes unilaterally in countries of strategic importance.[18] Similar to human rights, democracy today serves as a minimalist utopia, trumping any alternative visions of the future. The third myth of no politics argues that rather than seeing democratization process as a genuine source of positive change, we need to reveal a highly political logic of change. Democratization does not reveal natural desires of people for freedom, but rather imagines a particular political subject, one that is transparent, rational and systematic. By believing that free and fair democratic elections can rescue the oppressed by giving them an opportunity to elect the government they actually wanted, democratization MLOs deny the importance of structures that make democracy real. For elections to be possible, we require existence of the rule of law, a functional government, and effective political institutions that can uphold, channel and control political authority. Instead, MLOs apply universal pathological recipe in every case where they find an illiberal political regime. The last myth of the dangerous dark assumes that life in the authoritarian regimes is awful. In it, government oppresses people and keeps them in fear. In case of resistance, the regimes punish their citizens by locking them up in prison, killing or exiling to foreign countries. However, what democratization efforts cannot address is the 'day-time robbery', a legal set of policies of government that go against public interest in favor of the individual greed and not the people. Democratization as a doctrine of political transformation does

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[16] Rupert Cornwell, "Bush: God Told Me to Invade Iraq", *Independent*, 7 October 2005,
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/bush-god-told-me-to-invade-iraq-6262644.html (Accessed on 15 July 2018).
[17] William Dobson, *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy*, New York, Doubleday, 2012.
[18] Notable cases include interventions in Nicaragua, Panama, Iran contra, Iraq, among others.

not have a language to express economic injustices conducted by political regimes, both democratic and non-democratic alike. The doctrine is firmly rooted in the separation between political and economic realms with democratization only addressing political transformation. As a result, as Robert Cox has noted, "In times when property enjoys the right, politics becomes irrelevant"[19] and we have no language or frameworks to address economic injustices conducted by the democratic governments and MLOs.

**Table 1. Comparative Summary of Human Rights and Democratization Myths**

| THE MYTH of | HUMAN RIGHTS | DEMOCRATIZATION |
|---|---|---|
| PRESUMPTIVE UNIVERSALITY | Pronunciation of rights does not make them real. Not all communities set human rights as their top priority. | Ideas of democratic government without enforcement do not make democracy real. Liberal capitalist version of democracy is not a universal model desired by all communities in the world |
| DEEP ROOTS | The idea of human rights did not evolve from Enlightenment and natural rights. It became part of discourse and institutional policies in the 1970s. | Democracy has no deep roots. The version of political regimes of Ancient Greeks and Modern Europe were drastically different. Contemporary political regime was established in the mid-20th century. |
| NO POLITICS | Human rights activists are engaged in 'politics of fatalism' against regimes equipped with various tools of oppression. Activism is a highly political interference and assumes a particular political subject, with certain models of behavior. | Democratization suffers from 'politics of fatalism', because activists are preaching non-violence, but let the people decide how to change political rulers and non-democratic regimes. However, this 'advice' is not neutral, but highly political. |
| DANGEROUS DARK | The language of human rights assumes that violations happen in the cover of darkness, secret prisons, illegal captivity, confessions obtained under torture. But this language does not allow us to address violations of human rights by legal means and democratically elected rulers. | Democratization assumes that only illiberal states require assistance. It has no language to address non-democratic policies of democratically elected leaders or structural economic inequalities. |

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[19] Robert Cox, "Globalisation, Multilateralism and Democracy", *John Holmes Memorial Lecture,* Waterloo, ACUNS, 2000, http://acuns.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/Robert-Cox.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2015).

In order to illustrate the workings of four myths, this report will look at democratization efforts of the United Nations. UN is the perfect example of a multilateral organization: represented by both, state and non-state actors alike, it has an elaborate system of organizations that attempt to bring democracy forward in as many countries of the world as possible. This function is performed by the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). The DPA collects data from all bodies within the UN and publishes report on 'New and Restored Democracies' every three years. The report outlines the set of policies and priorities that guide the democratization efforts of all agencies within the UN. Studying the activities of the DPA is important, because this department is governed by the Under-Secretary-General of Political Affairs, a position, which has been historically controlled by the US. It is possible to see strong similarities between the US democratization efforts and these of the UN, which does illustrate the importance of the third myth. But before we get there, this paper will begin with a brief survey of the literature on multilateralism and democracy and then move towards discussion of the four myths. Discussion of each myth will be supplemented by the examples of the UN democratization efforts.

## DEBATES IN THE FIELD

Most of the debate about MLOs' capacity to conduct democratization efforts have centered on the question of the effectiveness of international norms in restoring democracy and curbing the power of the authoritarian regimes by questioning the implementation and the enforcement of these norms by various political.[20] Specifically, some scholars argue that MLOs are political and bureaucratic[21] and hence, incapable of making the real political change. In addition, scholars point out that MLOs undermine democracy, because representatives are not accountable to people or bounded by publicly sanctioned legal procedures. Indeed, Gartzke and Naoi point out that multilateral organizations are never neutral, but political.[22] Their political nature informs policies, which are veiled under the guise of neutrality. Gatzke and Naoi call for an understanding of the limits of MLOs' engagement in democratization processes. On the other hand, some scholars claim that

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[20] For example, Jon Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratisation", *International Organization*, Vol 56, 2002, pp. 515-549; Jason Brownlee, *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratisation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999; Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, 2002, pp. 21-35; Larry Diamond, "Universal Democracy?" Stanford, Hoover Institution, 2003, http://www.hoover.org/research/universal-democracy (Accessed on 15 November 2015); Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies around the World*, New York, Times Books, 2007; Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism,* Washington DC, CEIP, 2003.

[21] Robert Dahl, "Can International Organizations be Democratic? A Skeptic's View", Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon (eds.), *Democracy's Edges,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 19-36.

[22] Erik Gartzke, and Megumi Naoi, "Multilateralism and Democracy: a Dissent Regarding Keohane, Macedo and Moravcsik", *International Organisation*, Vol 65, 2011, pp. 589-98.

MLOs have a capacity to increase democratization efforts. "Democracy-Enhancing Multilateralism" written by Robert Keohane, Stephen Masedo and Andrew Moravcsikin 2009 and published in *International Organizations* is an exemplary article of this thinking. Although the authors' claim is related to the impact of MLOs on democracies, the article exemplifies how scholars think about MLOs. In it, the authors argued that state commitments to multilateral fora can help "restricting the power of special interest factions, protecting individual rights, and improving the quality of democratic deliberation, while also increasing capacities to achieve important public political purposes".[23] The debate over the power of MLOs to enforce and discipline states into respecting democratic norms is difficult to bridge since it exists at high levels of abstraction and evidence for both sides can be easily found in practice.

Besides the literature on policy analysis, another strand of the literature looks at MLOs as regimes by investigating the norms that they promote through policies. It argues that MLOs have an inherent ability to conduct more open and democratic policies precisely because these policies are made in a deliberative fashion. When equal actors come together, they can solve *all* conflicts. Dryzek's Deliberative Global Politics is a good example of this literature.[24] In his book. he argues that deliberation in the world of open and instantaneous mass media strengthens the accountability of MLOs not only to their governments, but to the global public. Openness serves as a constraint on the scale and scope of solutions. However, the main weakness of this scholarship is its overly optimistic thinking. Deliberation has multiple problems when accompanied by power inequalities. Persuasion of the arguments also requires majority to recognize the importance and validity of the arguments raised by the minority partners during the process of deliberation.[25]

Yet, both strands of scholarship have failed to clarify the way we think about global MLOs' democratization efforts by either engaging in the debates over the prospects of democratization or by fully trusting into the procedure that aims to create fully democratic communities. Each literature takes the purpose of democratization for granted. Rather than taking sides and arguing that one argument is better than another, this report wants to summarize the pathologies in thinking about MLOs' capacity for democratization by analyzing, both policies and discourses. In the next section, each of the four myths will be considered in detail and an example from the UN will be given. While alternative suggestions are not going to be provided here, this report will nonetheless point out the problems in the way we think about democratization processes.

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[23] Robert Keohane, Stephen Macedo and Andrew Moravcsik, 2009, op. cit., p. 1.

[24] John Dryzek, *Deliberative Global Politics: Discourse and Democracy in a Divided World,* Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006.

[25] Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

**THE MYTH OF PRESUMPTIVE UNIVERSALITY**

Before addressing the myth of democracy as a universal good, the author would like to unpack Marks' myth of presumptive universality in human rights so we can better understand the mechanisms at play. When it comes down to human rights, we think that rights are universal and everyone inherently has them just because they are human. As a result, human rights activism turns the struggle for human rights into propagation of these rights to people who may not be aware of their rights. By spreading the word, activists believe that once the rights are pointed to people who might not have them, the rights appear to exist. Raz, a human rights scholar at Oxford University, first pointed out this myth.[26] Susan Marks called it the *myth of presumptive universality*. Raz identified two major problems with the myth's logic. First, if the rights are spoken, but cannot be used, does it make the right real? In other words, if the right exists as a slogan, but is never enforced, can we really assume that the right exists? Second, our assumption that human rights are universal disregards the fact that they are culturally biased and may fail to represent people whose aspirations they are trying to advance.[27] As a result, Raz attempted to debunk false premises of human rights activism, which, in my opinion are duly applicable to the democratization process.

In order to support this argument Raz starts by drawing attention to the differences between moral and political rights. Moral rights are those ideals that do not require formal enforcement by the state or international community. In other words, it would be good to assume that everyone has the right to free education, but without proper institutions that make this right a reality, without bodies that monitor universality of its application and enforcement, this right ceases to exist. For Raz, the right to free education cannot exist, because it cannot be protected and thus remains an ideal. However, political rights are highly contingent on enforcement and most states have protection systems that are deemed to be efficient, reliable and fair. For example, the right to vote is enforced, monitored and administered by very specific institutions within the state. Hence, political right becomes the real right, because there is an agent who is responsible for monitoring violations and the enforcement of the right in practice. As a result, Raz draws a distinction between human rights as universal rights (which hardly exist) and political rights, those rights that are administered by the states with devoted government institutions.[28] As a result, Raz calls for careful reevaluation of reckless activism, because of their naïve assumption that declaration of the right makes the right real.[29] Raz reminds us that we need to be careful in separating rights from desires and moral claims.

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[26] Joseph Raz, 2010, op. cit., and Joseph Raz, "Human Rights Without Foundations", Oxford Legal Studies Research Paper No. 14, 2007, https://ssrn.com/abstract=999874 (Accessed on 17 November 2015).
[27] Ibid.
[28] Joseph Raz, 2010, op. cit., p. 43-44.
[29] Ibid., p. 47.

A similar argument can be made about the democratization process whose activists believe that democracy is universal and are engaged in illustrating violations of freedoms and the rule of law in regimes that suffer from the 'democratic deficit'. The belief in universality of democracy comes from the assumption that all people, no matter of their differences, aspire to the same set of values: peace, prosperity and freedom. Borrowed straight from the Enlightenment period, these values are highly Eurocentric and assume a particular political subject who is endowed with an understanding of needs, responsibilities and inclinations within a functioning state system addressing his/her concerns through institutions. However, in countries where institutions are weak and states are failed, it is hardly possible to assume that such subject exists and even wants democracy. Instead, the majority of people will be engaged in survival and will not care about the nature of state or its political regime. This critique has been leveled against the universality of human rights by Raz and Marks as well. It is important to note that democratization specialists and agencies are operating on the similar principle that needs to be recognized.

In addition, democratization activists are engaged in their own, what Wendy Brown called, 'reckless activism' by assuming that once the authoritarian tactics and mechanisms are exposed, a country somehow becomes more democratic.[30] Exposition of challenges to democracy has been the major aim of multiple non-governmental organizations, such as the Human Rights Watch, Transparency International, and Radio Free Europe. However, no matter how many times they have exposed problems, authoritarian regimes did not become more democratic. On the contrary, these regimes punish activists and their supporters; they are engaged in lobbying their interests abroad by hiring former politicians, such as Tony Blair working for Kazakhstan, and public relations firms that work to clean the image of authoritarian rulers. The myth of presumptive university shows that democratization will not become real, until real sanctions are imposed and devoted multilateral institutions have power to enforce their recommendations on states. Reckless activism only verbalizes our moral desires and aspirations for change, but does not lead to the actual change.

In order to illustrate these points, I would like to analyze UN's democratization efforts, which are highly ineffective by analyzing presumption of universality on four counts. First, in the spirit of the assumption of presumptive universality, UN believes that "[D]emocracy is one of the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations".[31] Its understanding of democracy is rather minimal, emphasizing not a specific form of governance or a political regime, but a set of principles that governments must adhere to in order to be considered democratic, such as "greater participation, equality, security and

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[30] Wendy Brown, 2004, op.cit.
[31] United Nations, "Democracy and the United Nations" 2018a,
http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/democracy/democracy_and_un.shtml (Accessed on 15 July 2018).

human development."[32] This definition helps the UNDP to justify $1.5 billion spent annually on democratization efforts around the world.[33] Second, the UN does not tailor its policies towards democratization on case-by-case basis. Instead, it designs a set of instruments that local offices are welcome to use. For example, while working at the Department of Political Affairs, I drafted Secretary-General's report on New and Restored Democracies. The report is based on the responses from surveys that local offices send to the headquarters by ticking one or several appropriate choices in the menu. Such practices not only reflect UN's unified approach to democratization around the world, but also show that the UN shares an assumption that each country has the same set of problems regardless of its historical past and political, economic and social context. Third, the UN has no enforcement mechanism and only recommendation power. The UN by nature is an International Organization, which means that states are the main decision-makers. States decide whether or not to support a particular policy or a goal. To bring in the famous statement belonging to the former the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: "If the UN does not support our interests, we won't support the UN: Managing a global institution was like trying to run a corporation with 184 chief executive officers – each with a different language, a distinct set of priorities, and an unemployed brother-in-law seeking a paycheck.[34] US continues to pressure the UN in supporting their policies by promising funding, but conditionally paying for projects. By May 2012. the US debt to the UN was 36% of the UN total budget.[35]

Fourth, major decision-makers in the UN Security Council that authorize the use of force against states, which violate universal principles of human rights are highly political and operate based on their perception of national interest, rather than genuine care for a better world. We have seen this work in multiple cases when international intervention was necessary, but permanent Security Council members could not agree on how to proceed or what to do regarding Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, Basar Asad, Omar al-Bashir and many others.

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[32] United Nations, "Democracy and the United Nations" 2018a,
http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/democracy/democracy_and_un.shtml (Accessed on 15 July 2018)..
[33] United Nations, "Global Issues: Democracy", 2018b, www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decoracy/index.html#DUN (Accessed on 15 July 2018).
[34] Madeleine Albright, 'Think Again: The United Nations', Foreign Policy Magazine, 29 October 2009, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/29/think-again-the-united-nations/ (Accessed on 18 June 2018).
[35] Giovanni Finizio, "United Nations", Lucio Levi (ed al), The Democratization of International Institutions: First International Democracy Report, Oxford, Routledge, 2014, p. 68.

For democratization efforts to work, United Nations must adopt a case-by-case approach to country's political transformation taking into consideration local contexts. Second, it must adopt an enforcement mechanism and only use it once the majority of local population calls for support and is unable to change the regime via peaceful means suffering from political oppression. Without wide local support, UN should concentrate on solving other problems more pertinent to indigenous communities its working with. In other words, UN programs should be determined and designed by grass-roots efforts, rather than imposed from the top.

**THE MYTH OF DEEP ROOTS**

The second myth that Susan Marks has identified deals with the fact that the struggle for human rights is presented as a long process with roots in the Enlightenment. Human rights courses begin with addressing the rights through declaration of man and citizen at the time of the French Revolution. Before that contract philosophers, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, have addressed the delicate balance between freedom of the individuals and the state. However, this assumption of deep roots does not match the reality. Although philosophical doctrines were popular and human rights declarations were abundant, human rights did not become an ultimate goal until at least the 1970s.[36] In other words, before 1970s people had different goals in mind, such as a welfare state, decolonization, independence and non-alignment movement. The discourse of human rights did not appear in government programs or official statements until the 1970s.[37]

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[36] Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, Cambridge, Belknap Press, 2012.
[37] Moyn, 2012, op.cit.

Samuel Moyn was a key scholar to reveal the myth of deep roots.[38] He claims that by showing long history of human rights that for many began with Greek civilization, and later accommodated by the Christian Europe to be fully developed during American War for Independence and French Revolution, we are "distracted from the real conditions for the historical developments they [human rights] claim to explain".[39] In other words, by treating human rights as metaphysical always-there, we are no longer capable of recognizing that the initial interpretations of human rights were always linked to state and issues of citizenship and were tremendously different from international cosmopolitan utopian vision of global enforcement of human dignity made by international supra- and trans-national actors. Second, by treating the history of human rights as universal, we tend of draw a check line of countries that joined one or another universal declaration of human rights rather than stressing accidents and discontinuities of these decisions.[40]

Moyn develops alternative history. He begins by noting that history of human rights before 1940s was linked to the relationship of natural right that governments had to respect regardless of their desires.[41] Following Hanna Arendt, Moyn argues that rights at that time depended on the membership of the national community. Citizens of each country had certain rights that were generally recognized as universal by most of them, or, as Moyn puts it human rights implied "politics of citizenship at home" vs "politics of suffering abroad".[42] If people who suffered revolted to seek institutionalization of human rights, it was seen as a natural course of events. But no one thought that these people have to be helped or assisted at the international level transcending the state altogether. But battle for better citizenship characterized by less suffering played an important role in inspiring decision to redefine the contents of state-society relations. For example, the right to self-determination as a human right would not list the rights and entitlements, but it would outline the reasons why people sought independence and why proposed course of action has been chosen. Moyn cites examples from the US Declaration of Independence and Virginia Declaration of Rights, which justified the need for independence from British colonialism and did not claim protection of universal entitlements of people due to their human origin.[43] In this regard, Moyn argues that human rights in the way we understand them today are relatively recent. They appeared in the 1970s and it is a mistake to attribute deep roots to their origin, precisely because such understanding hides the political and accidental nature of their character.

Therefore, Moyn treats contemporary human rights as the last utopia. For Moyn, human rights not only came into being as penultimate goals set by governments and

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[38] Moyn, 2012, op.cit.
[39] Idem., p. 12.
[40] Idem., p. 16.
[41] Idem., Ch. 1.
[42] Idem., p. 12.
[43] Idem., p. 24-26.

international organizations, but also the discourse of human rights sidelined all alternative goals, such as development, independence, or anti-colonialism that were popular before the 1970s. Specifically, Moyn defines utopia as a kind of telos, an image that needs to be reached by the whole human kind, but is impossible to implement in practice.[44] For Moyn, there were multiple utopias available in the 20th century, but human rights became the chosen ideal. In the book "The Last Utopia" Moyn goes on to show how alternatives of decolonization and independence no longer provided necessary framework for justice.[45] Young decolonized states found themselves in an increasingly dire situation as they strove for independence. Their leaders promised dignity, justice, modernity, prosperity, but instead, many found themselves governed by totalitarian regimes with dictators who consistently violated the promises. The only alternative that enabled people to overcome oppressive regimes was the idea that dictators infringe upon the basic rights of human being and human dignity. Individual understanding of freedom and liberty helped people to justify the need for difference. However, since structures of the states remained the same, human rights turned into utopian image, a desired goal that mobilized people for action, but did not really achieve completion in practice. Moyn does not believe that human rights will always remain the last utopia, instead, he is open to alternative visions. But today, human rights occupy the pedestal.

Democracy shares the myth of deep roots in the similar fashion. Most classes that teach the history of Western Philosophy and the history of Political Thought in general begin with the Greek notions of democracy transitioning to democratic revolutions in Western Europe and North America and finishing with democratic regime consolidation around the rest of the world. This trajectory is peppered with familiar stories about the evolution of liberal capitalist democracy from absolutism to constitutional monarchies to the republics in which citizens share irrevocable rights and responsibilities administered by governments that are selected via free and fair elections maintaining political accountability and representation.

However, the proposed historical trajectory and evolution of liberal democracy bears witness to the similar myth of deep roots. For example, for ancient Greeks democracy as 'demos/kratos' (the power of people) stood for the 'capacity to do things', whereas we understand democracy as a 'majority rule'.[46] In addition, only male property owners were able to vote and nominate themselves for public positions. Women, slaves and foreign residents were precluded from the voting rights. Greek philosophers treated this system as fair, because rivalries and status between male citizens were restricted and citizens were forced to respect each other since no one knew the positions they could get in the

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[44] Idem., p. 22.
[45] Idem., Ch. 5.
[46] Josiah Ober, "The Original Meaning of 'Democracy': Capacity to Do Things, Not Majority Rule", *Stanford Working Paper in Classics,* 2007, https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/ober/090704.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2015).

next electoral cycle. So the form of democracy that we know today is incomparable with Greek polis and should be treated as a separate category rather than linked experience.

Similar myths persist in the stories of French and American Revolutions, which presumably created modern-day democracies. However, the key debate was not about the power of people, but whether the government must be restricted by the rule of law or by majority rule. In other words, the republic as a system of representative government in which officials are governed by law, i.e. the constitution was preferred over democracy that was seen as a mob rule creating highly unstable and populist rule. James Madison described the differences in the following way:

> Hence it is that democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and in general have been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths... A republic, by which I mean a government in which a scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect and promises the cure for which we are seeking[47].

Republic was the preferred system of governing authority with the law restricting officials from following their own volition while in power. People who still preferred to practice democracy at the time of the French Revolution had a different understanding of the 'power of people'. Instead, French revolutionaries practiced living in a commune with everyone sharing responsibilities and chores, including those of raising kids, working in the fields, and building public housing. There was an utter disregard for privacy and only commune was seen as the fairest political regime, because it precluded exploitation by relegating rights and responsibilities to everyone equally. Paris Commune was not about the 'majority rule' at all.

In addition, the debate over why some countries remain democratic while other fail remained largely an academic debate up until the Cold War, when United States decided to support and propel democratic governments (and not only) around the world in order to prevent them from falling into the socialist camp.[48] Democratization became a tool of the development industry to promote anti-socialist regimes around the world. Therefore, democratization process, as an idea of spreading the benefits of liberal capitalist democracy over the world has also appeared recently.

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[47] James Madison, "Federalist Papers," 1787, https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers (Accessed on 17 November 2015).
[48] Mark Lagon, "Promoting Democracy: The Whys and Hows for the United States and International Community", *A Markets and Democracy Brief,* Washington DC, Council on Foreign Relations, 2011, http://www.cfr.org/democratization/promoting-democracy-whys-hows-united-states-international-community/p24090 (Accessed on 17 November 2015).

The United Nations assumes that democracy has deep roots by citing the presence of this issue in several founding documents.[49] However, a closer examination of this literature shows that democracy as a concept did not appear in the official documents until 1988, when the UN held its first Conference on New or Restored Democracies in Manila, Philippines. *UN Charter* does not mention democracy at all, the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* only states that 'the will of people shall be the basis of the authority of government'.[50] The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,* 1966 specifies freedoms and rights that should be guaranteed and by all signatory states without specifying the form of political regime. Indeed, democracy was interpreted through human rights. Officially, such link was clearly outlined only in 1993 when UN members adopted the Vienna Declaration and its 'Plan of Action', paragraph 8 of which stated that:

> Democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. In the context of the above, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels should be universal and conducted without conditions attached. The international community should support the strengthening and promoting of democracy, development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire world.[51]

The assumption was that once rights 'appear', democracy will be the logical outcome. It was due to the US President Bill Clinton who took up the idea of democracy and democratic enlargement as its presidential goal and promoted this idea internationally that the UN began to address the issue of democracy. Such normative transition was embraced by Boutros-Ghali, a new Secretary-General, who led the UN from 1992-1996.[52] In the 1990s, the UN began to insert the term in its working documents on par with peace and development. For example, in 1993 the World Conference on Human Rights stated that democracy and human rights are interdependent and recommended for the UN to assist governments in realizing their democratic potential. Officially, this norm appeared in December 1994 when the UN General Assembly adopted 49/30 Resolution.[53] Since then democracy became mainstream in the UN language. The next Secretary-General Kofi

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[49] United Nations, 2018b, op.cit.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Roland Rich and Edward Newman, 2004, op. cit., p. 8 citing Vienna Declaration 1993.
[52] Giovanni Finizio, 2014, op. cit., p. 63.
[53] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Democracy", 2011, www2.ohchr.org/English/issues/democracy/index.htm (Accessed on 15 July 2018).

Annan added institutions to facilitate democracy promotion, such as the Democracy Fund, established in 2005, in order to fund 330 projects in 110 countries of the world.[54]

Such political opening or a window of opportunity appeared only after the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Before that, democracy was a highly debated term with both Soviet Union and the United States inserting their own highly contradictory meanings to it. For the Soviet Union democracy without socio-economic rights and material equality was a myth. For the United States, democracy without political freedoms and representation was a variation of totalitarian oppressive regime. Therefore, if MLOs ever wanted to pass internationally recognized documents, it was pertinent not to mention democracy. Instead, MLOs preferred to engage in electoral assistance. Although even this measure was also institutionalized relatively late, in 1991, when the UN was able to create a focal point for electoral assistance and only then engage in more effective ways of support in political transformation.[55]

The roots of contemporary democracy are not deep. Rather than seeing the evolution of this form of government through 'deep roots', it is much more fruitful to consider contemporary type of democracy as a separate form and version that is informed by the particular conditions of the political economy. The capitalist liberal democracy that we are living in is a different form of government that is based on the republican principle of the rule of law, managed by individuals who are elected through free and fair voting process in which decisions are taken with the 'majority rule'. Democratization thus was and is an inherently political project. Its prescriptions alter the social, economic and political structures of states. This understanding brings us to the third myth of 'no politics', which shows that rather than thinking that democratization is a universal good wanted by all human beings on the planet, development industry needs to understand that they are political players and not simply neutral do-gooders.

## THE MYTH OF NO POLITICS

Susan Marks relied on the work of critical social theorist Wendy Brown to reveal the argument that human rights activists coat their inherently political work as value-neutral. By citing Michael Ignatieff Wendy Brown tries to reveal the undergirding outcomes of value-neutral thinking. Specifically, she criticized the following line of thinking: "…I take to the elemental priority of all human rights activism: to stop torture, beatings, killings, rape, and assault to improve, as best we can, the security of ordinary people. My minimalism is not

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[54] Giovanni Finizio, 2014, op. cit., p. 64.
[55] Roland Rich and Edward Newman, 2004, op. cit., p. 14.

strategic at all. It is the most we can hope for".[56] Brown calls this stance as 'anti-politics' describing it as a 'pure defense of the innocent and the powerless against power'.[57] But what happens with this understanding is that the discourse of human rights activists zooms on suffering rather than a comprehensive justice and evaluation of root causes of these events.[58] In other words, human rights activists are not interested in solving the issue once and for all. Instead, they thrive in places where suffering is a never-ending story. They need to show pain for them to justify their existence. By doing so, they veer the discourse away from substantive issues of global inequality, global environmental challenges that can only be addressed by finding comprehensive, complex and politically unpopular solutions.

Brown identifies three ways of how the myth of no politics persists throughout the industry. First, 'the language of individual empowerment' not only calls for change in people's mentality and ability to protect themselves, but also produces a modern individual capable of knowing rights and responsibilities, desires and wants and capable of finding solutions to problems at the individual level without involving traditional norms and institutions of power.[59] Second, the myth is also visible through policy prescriptions. Activists in the field think that once individuals obtain capacities and freedoms to do what they want, the whole sets of benefits will appear.[60] For example, when people have freedom to engage in agriculture by deciding on what crops to grow and whom to sell, they can obtain much bigger revenues that can be spent on healthcare, education and better nutrition. Eventually people's ingenuity will pay off once they become free and live in the system that respects these rights and freedoms. However, by refusing to adopt broader historical perspective, human rights activism falls into a trap of forgetting why present-day inequalities appeared in the first place. Activists skip years of colonialism and imperialism that brought authoritarian dysfunctional regimes that extracted wealth through exploitation of local people. Third, moral value-free stance of human rights does not guarantee equality.[61] For Brown 'rights do not shield against power'[62], instead, the language of rights exists in a separate realm from political institutions. The language of rights can remain as a permanent criticism of existing authority but without appropriate institutions to challenge authority, rights cannot provoke necessary political change. In other words, according to Brown: "Americans have never had so many rights… and so little power to shape collective

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[56] Wendy Brown ''The Most We Can Hope For ...': Human Rights and the Politics of Fatalism', South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol 103, 2004, p. 452 citing Michael Ignatieff, *Human Rights as Politics and Idolatry,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 173.
[57] Idem., p. 453.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Idem., p. 455.
[60] Idem., p. 456.
[61] Idem., p. 458.
[62] Ibid.

justice and national aims".[63] Rights and power are not linked through conduits like fluids in communicating vessels. The enlargement of rights does not mean the diminishing effect on power. Moral language of rights mistakenly assumes that victims need to pull themselves through strings and disregards institutions of power that create appalling situations in the first place. By shaping a particular understanding of politics that does not address institutional contexts, human rights activists are actively engaged in a political project centered on individuals. Brown calls this type of activism the 'politics of fatalism', because activists criticize cruelties without analyzing the sources and reasons of each situation.[64]

The myth of no politics exists in activism of democracy-promoters as well. First, many activists treat democracy as a universal, value-free, natural good. The underlying assumption is that no one could refuse democracy since it is the best system of government human beings invented so far regardless of its shortcomings.[65] In addition, democracy (as conceptualized by contract theorists, such as Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire) is depicted as the best system that nurtures and develops human nature due to its ability to regulate strive for power through cooperation and conflict in the name of the common interest. Indeed, the fact that we are living in the era when most of the countries are de jure democratic is the case in point. Being a dictator is an unfashionable enterprise. It undermines countries' ability to draw capital and investment, to gain international recognition, to trade freely without the threat of sanctions in the international markets. As a result, we have multiple versions of democracy that includes countries like Mali and Russia on the one hand as well as Norway and Sweden on the other.[66] Since democracy is perceived as a universal good that everyone wants, activists in the area of democracy-promotion are engaged in assisting everyone to reach this goal. Their job is to reveal how bad authoritarian governments are and how wrong their rule is, i.e. how many universal norms they violate beginning from violations of the freedom of movement to the freedom of speech.

In order to support all regimes in achieving the goals of their political transformations towards democracy, the UN has set several goals for its democratization efforts: a) assisting democratic deficits; b) promoting democratic governance; c) supporting transitional democracies; and d) guiding national and regional efforts.[67] The UN adopts a largely state-centric method and aims to change government institutions. As a result, it generally acts as an advisor to parliaments in improving legislative frameworks, conducts

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[63] Idem., p. 459.
[64] Susan Marks, 2012, op. cit., p. 11.
[65] Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
[66] *Report of the Secretary-General on the Support by the United Nations System of the Efforts of Governments to Promote and Consolidate New or Restored Democracies*, United Nations, New York, United Nations, 2005.
[67] United Nations, 2018b, op. cit.

reviews and makes recommendations. These policies enable the UN to cooperate with various countries, which hardly fit the academically rigorous definitions of democracy. At the same time, non-democratic regimes also benefit from such support, because they can show international community and business outlets that they are setting on the path of political transformation, even if democratic telos remains a declaratory principle.

The UN also works with grass roots activists. UN democratization specialists call these activities 'empowerment', since they reveal the universal truth to a person who was not aware of their own plight. Empowerment in practice means that civil society organizations are invited to design projects in 'empowerment of civil society'[68] in their native states and apply for funding from the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF). The UNDEF sponsors projects in seven main areas:

- Community activism
- Rule of law and human rights
- Tools for knowledge
- Women's empowerment
- Youth engagement
- Media and freedom of information
- Strengthening civil society capacity for interaction with government.[69]

No wonder that the UN Fund spends most of its money on civic education projects and democratic dialogue/constitutional processes.[70] It continues to operate in a similar fashion despite losing half of the amount of contributions in its budget.[71]
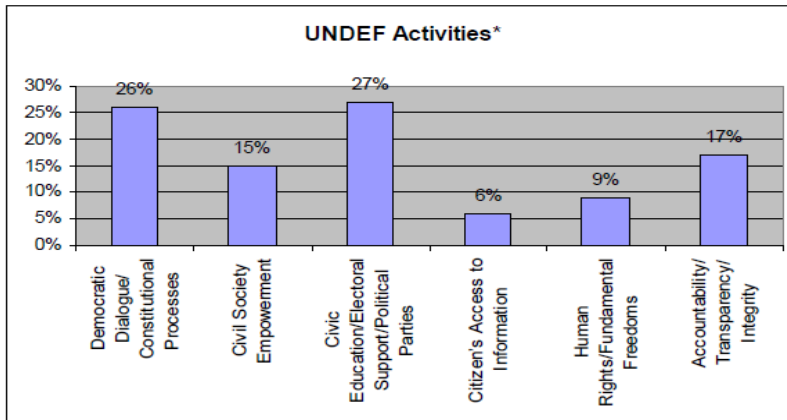
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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] *UN Democracy Fund: A First Year Analysis*, New York, Freedom House, 2006, https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/UNDEF_analysis_19dec06.pdf (Accessed on 15 July 2018).
[71] Office of Internal Oversight Services, 'Internal Audit of the United Nations Democracy Fund', New York, United Nations, 2010, p. 2.

**UNDEF Activities***



*Source: Freedom House. UN Democracy Fund: A First Year Analysis. 22 December 2006, p. 4.*

By sharing these so-called "revelations" that are coated as universal values, democratization activists are creating a particular political subject, one that is transparent, rational and systematic. Once created, this new subject can participate in free and fair democratic elections, which can rescue the oppressed by giving them an opportunity to elect the government they actually wanted. The ideal UN subject should be able to mobilize population, be an effective speaker, enable vulnerable people to take care of themselves and participate in government regulations. The effective political subject should be able to use the media, know his/her rights and stand for truth against oppressive regimes. In other words, the type of individual they want to nurture is not neutral, but a community leader equipped with knowledge about how things should be to stand against the injustices of his/her government.

But by proliferating these seemingly anti-political ideals of how every 'normal' government must operate, they are deceiving the subject in two fundamental ways. First, the new political subject is asked to understand the wrongs, but decide on further actions alone, independent of the advice democratization experts. Experts can only assist the subject by informing them on how true democratic politics supposed to function and offer possible solutions that are also grounded within the framework of rights and laws in encouraging largely non-violent action. In other words, besides the knowledge of own rights and responsibilities as citizens of a given state, empowerment means that local people are also aware of peaceful popular mobilization and non-violent resistance techniques. Here, as Brown pointed out, something disingenuous happens: experts and activists leave the newly enlightened subject to decide on their own sets of actions, but call for non-violent resistance. Violence is depicted as derogatory, due to the fact that it undermines the rights of other people and, hence, is not moral and worthy of a democrat.

However, activists are asked to fight a regime equipped with structural, systematic tools of oppression that targets not only activists themselves, but their friends and family. The struggle is therefore, quite unequal. Second, democratization activists never acknowledge the importance of structures that make democracy real. For elections to be possible, we require the rule of law, functional government, effective political institutions that can uphold, channel and control political authority. As a result, similar to the human rights activists, democratization efforts fail to transform moral discourse into real political change. That area remains grey and depends on the decision of the subject. Brown calls this gap the 'politics of fatalism', a solution which leaves democratization half-way without providing people with radical enough changes to create genuinely free and accountable political institutions.

Indeed, only in 2006 the United Nations finally agreed on the need to punish dictatorial regimes that violate the rights of their citizens due to disproportionate access to power by calling for international intervention and placing overall responsibility on the international community to protect the weak and powerless against systematic abuse. Selected 'lucky' cases have experienced the 'blessings' of international intervention, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya. Their original leaders were disposed in the name of justice and democracy, but the new system ended up to be highly unstable and unsecure so much so that the newly elected, 'democratic' government used more violence to stay in power and defend itself from the encroachment of militant opposition. With this said, we can extrapolate Brown's argument to the area of democratization and notice similar problems with our present inability to offer a genuine radical alternative path to comprehensive regime change. Training of the domestic opposition in non-violent resistance techniques and/or international intervention are not comprehensive solutions as dictators remain overwhelmingly strong due to the entrenched power not only in political, but also in economic realm.

Frequently, due to half-measures, when one dictator is disposed, another one is ready to step in and rule the system in a similar fashion. The system of economic production, resource distribution, incentives of the external markets – all of these factors facilitate 'business as usual'.  This system suits everyone: for the UN without the radical comprehensive change, the UN democratization activists always have job security as new recruits continue to carry out the 'politics of fatalism' and struggle for voice under highly unequal and unfair circumstances. It also suits non-democratic regimes, which say that they are on the way of becoming democratic and the transformation path is never perfect. For democratization efforts to work, we need to have a more radical and comprehensive understanding of power in non-democratic regimes and address systemic inequalities in the strife for democratic change.

**THE MYTH OF DANGEROUS DARK**

The struggle for freedoms and activism in the authoritarian regimes lead us to another myth identified by Susan Marks. The myth of the dangerous dark makes us think that most of the injustices are political violations of rights that take place under the cover of darkness.[72] Activists are threatened, kidnapped, beaten and killed at night by a group of people that the dictatorial regime 'can never find'. Hence, politics of fatalism is a futile but the only method that activists find to be morally and legally righteous against the oppressive political machine. However, for Marks, this thinking is flawed. Indeed, many injustices do happen under the cover of darkness, but it is important for us to recognize that the language of human rights and in our case, the language of democratization prevent us from addressing the nature of economic injustices. Specifically, just like in human rights, democratization language fails to point to the set of problems in democratic states. UN efforts do not aim to support democracy in the United States or Austria, where political leaders have been engaged in outright violations of basic human rights and main international conventions regarding migration, refugees, and freedom of religious worship. Legal violations of moral principles, which human rights are based on do not have the language of expression. Since we are unable to address such crimes through internationally recognized norms, instruments to punish people for such crimes do not exist, keeping our gaze on violent and brutal acts in authoritarian regimes. In it, government oppresses people and keeps them in fear. In case of resistance, the regimes punish their citizens by locking them up in prison, killing them or exiling them to foreign countries. However, what democratization efforts cannot address is the 'day-time robbery', a perfectly legal set of policies of government being accountable to market and not the people.[73] Democratization as a doctrine of political transformation does not have a language to express economic injustices conducted by political regimes, both democratic and non-democratic alike. The doctrine is firmly rooted in separation between political and economic realms with democratization only addressing political transformation. As a result, as Robert Cox has noted, "In times when property enjoys the right, politics becomes irrelevant"[74] and we have no language or frameworks to address economic injustices conducted by the democratic governments and MLOs. In other words, this is not to say that life in non-democratic regimes is easy or pleasant, but I am pointing out that our system of language cannot address the nature of economic injustices. We need new concepts, which will allow us to engage in radical rethinking of capitalist political economy so we can, as Marks

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[72] Susan Marks, 2012, op. cit., p. 13.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Robert Cox, "Globalisation, Multilateralism and Democracy", *John Holmes Memorial Lecture,* Waterloo, ACUNS, 2000, http://acuns.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/Robert-Cox.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2015).

pointed out, distinguish the difference between illegal practices against the rights of people and practices that violate the rights of people legally.[75]

## AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

This report outlined four democratization myths that are inherent in the work of United Nations. It criticized its flawed presumption of universality, a claim that democracy is a universal good and has universal attributes. It also criticized UN efforts for assuming that democracy has 'deep roots'. In practice, the concept of democracy began to appear in the UN official documents in the 1990s with the fall of the Soviet Union and increased US efforts of spreading democracy around the world. The contemporary version of democracy is based on the concept of republic, majority-rule and electoral representation. The third myth that the UN democratization efforts are apolitical causes activists to engage in the uneven battle against regimes equipped with systemic tools of oppression. Without institutional support and enforcement mechanisms, democratization will remain a desired goal left at the privilege of dictators. Lastly, the myth of the dangerous dark, which assumes that authoritarian regimes are engaged in violations of the basic principles of democracy under the cover of darkness prevents us from thinking about legal violations of moral norms. It prevents us from addressing crimes conducted in daylight - from addressing such problems as police killings of African American males, US President Trump's deportation policies of migrants with kids who are American citizens, and discriminatory anti-Islamic policies of some of the EU countries to name the few. We do not have the language of criticizing anti-democratic policies of authoritarian rulers who came to power via democratic means and who use legal instruments illiberally.

For the UN to function in a more fruitful manner, it must go beyond and above central governments and work closely with communities on the ground in both consolidated democracies and in illiberal regimes. It must provide communities with not only advice, but also instruments to fight the oppression, both political and economic and adopt a more radical stance against injustice. It must also develop not only a vision for the democratic future, but also ensure that such vision is truly representative and in line with the desires of local communities, not states. In order to do so, the UN must move away from representing democracy in the language of human rights. By assuming that once human rights provide a foundation for democratic transformation, its work suffers from double myths. We are forced to correct human rights myths first, before we can criticize UN's democratization efforts.

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[75] Susan Marks, 2012, op. cit., p. 14-15.

In conclusion, the author would like to stress once again that this report by no means denigrates the importance of work that has been some on the ground, but calls for a more attuned and systematic way of thinking about democratization efforts worldwide.

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