



In the face of Covid-19, which regime manages the crisis better?

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Introduction

Facing a global pandemic that requires coordination, scientific transparency, and regular updating of data sharing, democracies appear to be better armed whereas authoritarian regimes give the impression that they hold a natural superiority through the discipline they are able to impose on their populations; while hybrid regimes seemed to manage efficiently the pandemic at the beginning but ended up deadlocked. Some democracies were unsuccessful in managing the pandemic while other dictatorships have failed in their reputation and count the victims of the Covid 19 by the thousands; whereas some democracies were criticised for the drastic restrictions imposed on their populations. Multiple questions arise. While some are looking to answer the question whether the authoritarian or democratic regimes managed to better fight the pandemic of Coronavirus; others raise the issue of culture, claiming that societies imprinted with Confucian culture are more obedient to their rulers and therefore respect the rules more than the recalcitrant and less obedient European populations; whereas others questioned to what extent the measures adopted by North African states comply with human rights. In fact, these questions remain vague and irrelevant to the extent that everything is not political. Chernobyl had shown that dictatorships manage crises badly, except that it is not a crisis like any other, but a global humanitarian crisis exposing all regimes, all the states. Hence, the questions that impose themselves are: why did the countries of South East Asia and China – home of the pandemic – succeed in almost defeating the threat of Covid; while states such as France, Spain and the United States failed? Why in North Africa the statistics show a reduction of Covid infections, whereas medical staff and NGO's claim the opposite? Is it because of the bad governance; the model of the regime; or does it go further than these? And to what extent the measures taken by these states – and in particular North African – agree with democratic standards and respect human rights? The answers to these questions through his research show that there is a combination of measures and decisions that have made certain states to come out less weakened than others from the fight against the pandemic.

In the absence of in-depth academic research, our evidence will be limited to the analysis of the speeches of the political actors of the various States, statistics and the prose measures taken in order to eradicate the threat of Covid. The research will not be limited to an inquiry authoritarianism-democracy but rather to analyse the democratic regimes and authoritarian regimes among themselves in their fight against the health threat, because there is no such thing as one model of authoritarian or democratic regime.

I. The world under threat

Faced with the current crisis, the question that imposes itself is to what extent states were able to limit the progression of the pandemic. This question remains relevant to the extent that we have the opportunity to compare the respective effectiveness of states adopting democratic, authoritarian and hybrid model's regimes in reducing this pandemic. Some governments failed to ensure the necessary protection tools for their populations such as protective masks, while other imposed confinement but were unable to meet the needs of the poor classes of their populations (Brazil). We also had reached a level where doctors were forced to make ethical choices between patients who could be saved and others who could not be as was the case in Italy, Spain and Algeria. That is, states were forced to adopt restrictive measure in order to limit the progression of the Corona virus, and to limit by four the social interaction among people. It is at this level that we can already compare the effectiveness of the measures deployed respectively in in some democratic and authoritarian regimes, and to answer these questions through analysing the cases of China, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan France, Germany and USA.

II. Eastern Asia

In China and Singapore, time was for the implementation of strict measures restricting individual freedoms. Among the measures taken there is the mandatory quarantine and the confinement. Respecting social distancing in work places, and wearing masks in public. The government had placed over 750 million Chinese at home. The Chinese authorities had also strengthened measures at ports of entry and quarantine by setting up an emergency plan for public health emergencies in the country's ports and launched the health declaration card system for the country's entry and exit in cities, as well as strict control of the body temperature of passengers entering and exiting.

In terms of Artificial Intelligence, Asian countries have been strongly committed - for decades- to digital surveillance, and they claim that big data has enormous potential for defence against the pandemic. When China began responding to the virus, it relied on its strong technological expertise, and more specifically on artificial intelligence (AI), data science and new technologies to track and combat the pandemic. Spatial-temporal tracing represents a major key in monitoring the virus, as many countries referred to including China, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, France UK, etc. Indeed, when it is correlated with medical data, it makes it possible to establish the trajectory taken by a patient with Covid 19 in order to monitor the evolution of the virus in these areas and identify possible new epidemic centres.

In the city-state, not only virologists and epidemiologists were fighting the virus, but also computer scientists and big data specialists who were the attack weapons against the virus. In addition to surveillance by drones and cameras, Singapore's mobile application – set up thanks to a Bluetooth signal between smartphones – made it possible to identify people who have been in contact with coronavirus patients within two meters for a period of at least 30 minutes. The Singaporean Ministry of Health in March aimed for 75% of the population to download the application, because only its massive use could allow the possibility of effective exploitation of the data collected. It is part of the SGUnited3 initiative, which is based on strong support from citizens. In a context of protection of privacy, guarantees have been provided by the government attesting that the application locally records encrypted identifiers not linked to a telephone number, and ensuring that only the Ministry of Health

has the key decryption. With respect to human rights, all data collected is neither stored nor used for other purposes.

Vietnam applied a very strict methodology since the declaration of the first infected case of the virus (returned from Wuhan); which consisted of identifying people and groups at risk, confining them, testing them and isolating positive cases. A methodology derived from the method recommended by the Director General of WHO. This is not very eloquent as a method but the difference with the countries of Europe is that the country decided to do it at the first alert.

III. Democracies under attack

At the start of the pandemic, there was a moment of uncertainty in France. Political leaders did not envision such a resurgence of the virus. Initially classified as an epidemic, the corona quickly crossed all state borders and hit all populations of the world head-on. Those who acted quickly and adopted more or less drastic measures, managed to limit the progression of the virus and to halve the number of contaminations and deaths. On the other hand, countries like France responded late to the alert launched by the WHO, hence the scale of the cases of contamination. The same was to happen in Italy and Spain where people did not take their government's recommendations seriously.

France had less capacity for daily testing which did not exceed 2,500 per day, because of the instruction which was to only detect cases of suspicion. It was promised a million masks from China by June but failed to produce any itself. Much ink has been spilled and even some had criticized the French government for its incompetence to produce masks as did countries like Morocco, whose technological resources are much less inferior to that of France.

We have to compare the comparable. Democratically speaking, when talking about France, we have to compare it to another European democratic state such as Germany. By the end of April 2020, coronavirus has caused the death of nearly 20,000 people in France compared to 4,500 in Germany, a country that is more populous (83 million German inhabitants compared to 65 French). Germany was in a bad position because of an elderly population, however, it was able to very quickly deploy tests that made it possible to detect and isolate contagious people, including asymptomatic ones. Germany – unlike France – has made decisions to close borders, massive screening, and containment. It had ordered a general containment, closure of schools, cinemas, and sports clubs at the early propagation of the pandemic in Europe. With healthcare costs comparable to France, but twice as many resuscitation beds and flexibility linked to federal structures, the German example also raises questions about the bureaucracy and the centralization of the French system. In April, Germany mourned A deaths against 17,000 in France. Germany now appears to be in a much better position facing the Covid 19 pandemic.

President Donald Trump has been the subject of much criticism from the Democratic camp, including Barack Obama, who deplores that “the new cases are still breaking records.” In ten months, Covid 19 has killed more than 225,000 people in the United States, a country largely in the lead in terms of deaths. Since the resurgence of the pandemic in the United States, Donald Trump has worked to politicize the coronavirus crisis. The American president has made health a political object and has not hesitated to politicize the Covid 19 pandemic which is hitting the country. Scientific subjects have become political fights, whether it is the wearing of masks, medical treatment, or dealing with the situation. Even during his electoral campaign, Donald Trump persisted in defending his economic record, putting the health situation in the background in the midst of the Corona crisis. The president had even censored scientific studies published in newsletters and by the centre for disease control and prevention, and have dismissed information on the contagion of children in order to

reopen schools and boost the economy. The president's administration has not invested in advanced technologies to limit the spread of the virus as was the case in Asia. The collapse of the health system was caused by a deep slippage of the presidential leadership.

Scientists- including Rick Bright, a former vaccine specialist at the US Department of Health- claim that an action plan against the pandemic was proposed to the president who preferred to dismiss it in order to maintain his plans. This expert was ousted from the health department in April by the federal administration when he publicly questioned the strategy defended by Donald Trump.

Donald Trump's health policy efforts crystallized around the dismantling of Obama care Act; the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act aimed to provide health coverage to 32 million Americans who lack it. Two years after Donald Trump came to power, the law was emptied of its substance; Americans no longer have the legal obligation to be insured. Many believed that China's success in bringing the coronavirus epidemic under control relatively quickly was because of measures that were effective but could not work in a democratic state. However, this seems quite relative since Japan, Taiwan, South Korea have followed the same path. The resources deployed for the hospitals were very important, and the army was even mobilized to disinfect the towns. Finally, Korea has used interesting technological means, such as "drive in" tests to avoid contact, and information transmitted by smartphones to patients to ask them not to leave their homes and to keep in contact in the event of deterioration of their health condition for rapid interventions. As a result, there were only 60 deaths in Korea against more than 800 in Italy in the first month for an equivalent number of patients, and in countries with a priori comparable means. This is not only because China, Singapore, or Vietnam have an authoritarian-based mentality. Proof of this is South Korea and Japan democracies that have used similar tracking methods. If this policy works for such a huge population, it is simply because it is approved and applied by the entire population. In Vietnam as in Japan, Korea, or China, this consensus in favour of such intrusive methods is based on a fundamental cultural and civilizational fact that is Confucianism.

In Asia (Southern and South-East), people trust the state more, and their societies are organized more strictly than Western societies. Why are they committed to respecting the restrictions more than others – a model that Europe has not yet known? What about the Confucian spirit? Did it contribute to fighting the pandemic?

The Chinese, Singaporeans, Japanese, Vietnamese and Taiwanese are imbued with Confucian principles, particularly the Lee principles stated in discussions of Confucius.¹ By raising the moral conscience of the masses, harmony is established within the society. The principles of an entire society are based on Confucian principles which require society to be united and to foster community life. The strategy of South East Asia and China in the face of the pandemic has proved to be effective. This is not only a question of political regime, but also comes down to the culture of their society which is based on the value of "holism" and not individualism, as the case is in many European states.

In terms of people's mobilization against the pandemic, Chantal Delsol² specifies that: "Confucian anthropology is based more on the responsibility of the individual than on his autonomy". Where the heirs of the Enlightenment say: my freedom ends where the other's begins, the Confucian heritage says: my freedom ends where my responsibility begins. This does not mean that the followers of these Asian values do not value freedom, but they see it as a "quality in situation" rather than a "substantial quality". It is perhaps this spirit that has helped Asian countries to deal with the pandemic quickly and effectively. When talking about the South Korean case, we relate it more to liberal democracies such as Europeans, and don't assimilate it as much to a dictatorship. However, unlike the democratic European states, South Korea stood out strongly. Without confinement, without giving up autonomy, but by "placing" freedom at the heart of a mobilization embodied by a State whose word is

respected, in the very name of group interest, but also of each individual in the group. By saving the Group, I save myself. The Korean spirit accepts that his freedom is under strict surveillance, as long as the state uses the data it collects for the benefit of all, a higher principle. South Korea in its fight against the coronavirus has benefited from the immediate commitment of the population, accepting directives without flinching, while in return demanding absolute transparency of information and a sense of responsibility from its leaders. Mass screening tests, masks accessible to all, consistent information, all opposed to the French and Italian scenarios.

The methods used by some Asian countries would be unbearable and deemed unacceptable and incompatible with the values of European societies. The future is already beginning to paint the results of those methods employed by China, Vietnam, Singapore, South Korea, and their neighbours, more congruent than the patchwork of measures that has gradually taken hold in Europe and the US. For the time being, Confucian countries share with the rest of the world a lesson of life which says that in the face of adversity, a tight-knit, disciplined, and well-led group always prevails over a mass of autonomous egoistic individuals, recalcitrant to authority.

IV. North Africa faces the Pandemic

Much has been written about the measures taken by Morocco in its fight against the coronavirus, some even made it an example to follow. However, the kingdom's strategy is not irreproachable. Many have criticized these measures in terms of their inconsistency with democratic standards. Not only has Morocco been criticized for non-compliance to measures taken with the democratic standards (by other North African states), but also democratic states have been targeted by criticism (under the spotlight of critics)³. We have mentioned different states from the Asian and European continents in terms of the fight against Covid 19. But what about the manner in which North African countries managed to combat the virus? Instead of taking each state apart, we will discuss the region of North Africa, taking into account some exceptions.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Morocco was cited by many countries for its agility,⁴ its governance – under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI – and, above all, its consistency in decision-making and the involvement of the population through the Covid 19 Special Fund and the media to maintain public trust.

Measures taken by North African states included forced confinement, suspension of international travels links, suspension of domestic flights and restrictions on public and private transport between cities – except for the transport of goods and basic products –, and the closure of schools, other educational institutions, etc.

The wearing of masks having become obligatory, the Kingdom embarked on manufacturing them at very competitive prices. Thanks in part to grants from the Anti-Covid 19 Special Fund set up by the Ministry of Industry, local textile factories converted to produce masks from non-woven material. In total, 34 factories mass-produced more than 7 million units per day. Encouraging this type of initiative, other categories of businesses joined forces and combined specialties, choosing to manufacture other protective products such as visors, screening booths, insulating partitions for vehicles, disinfectants, medical gowns, etc.

As in most countries, technology serves North African states; drones - equipped with national technologies - have been used for the disinfection of public places, others are equipped with thermal cameras to detect citizens with a temperature above normal, yet others with loudspeakers to advise people to stay home and to warn recalcitrant individuals. In addition, applications were created to identify all those infected and all those who may have come into contact with sick people, in order to avoid creating new sources of contamination.

While other countries gave way in the face of the health crisis, Morocco and Tunisia stood out for their responsiveness and fairness in decision-making. All the measures decided and taken at the sanitary, economic, or social levels received massive support from the population. The informal sector was directly impacted, given the sudden shutdown of activities, which resulted in a disruption in the financial inflow to families who depend on it. It is in this logic that Morocco created the Covid 19 Fund to provide financial assistance according to the number of people per household: 800 Dh per family of two, 1,000 Dh per family of three, and 1,200 Dh per family of four and above.

North African governments quickly took measures to strengthen institutional coordination, by creating inter-ministerial structures. The Tunisian government, for instance, set up a National Authority bringing together senior officials from all ministries responsible for monitoring the pandemic. This Authority also ensured coordination between the National Committee to Combat the coronavirus, chaired by the Government Presidency, and the regional committees responsible for natural disasters. It aimed to “monitor the regularity of the supply of basic products, the distribution of social assistance to poor families without income, as well as the transmission of recommendations to the National Committee to combat Covid 19”⁵; so that, the adequate useful measures shall be taken to limit the spread of the virus.

Morocco created a series of new online issuance services with an aim to reduce the exchange of paper documents, thereby limiting the risk of Covid 19 transmission through paper. Governments also set up websites collecting all the information on the Covid 19 situation in their countries. These sites provided citizens with answers to the most frequently asked questions, fought against disinformation, and gave advice to ensure the population’s good health, and help fight the spread of the pandemic. In a perspective aimed at combating the pandemic, the governments of all North African countries resorted to various exceptional and strict measures in order to protect the safety and health of individuals and society. Morocco initiated the process and took several measures in the face of the state of a health emergency, including the following:

The security dimension adopted by Morocco reflected a new approach to security institutions. Therefore, the institutions present in the field, such as the National Security, the Gendarmerie, Auxiliary Forces, and the Army engaged in different ways combining the purely security-oriented aspect with that of communication and awareness, as well as the social aspect, since their staff also acted as mediators in a number of social situations.

Sanitary dimension: the health sector benefited from significant support from the Coronavirus Fund, which provided it with approximately two billion dirhams; in addition, medical units under the Royal Armed Forces’ authority were also engaged in this fight.

Socio-economic dimension: it is known that the informal sector was directly impacted, given the sudden shutdown of activities which resulted in a disruption in the financial inflows to families who depended on it. It is in this logic that Morocco created the Tadamon Covid 19 fund to provide financial assistance according to the number of people per household.

The health crisis severely tested all regimes and particularly states in transition such as Morocco. The government and particularly the Prime Minister – whose outputs were repeatedly compared to that of Emmanuel Macron or Edouard Philippe –, made hazardous media outings and speeches that did not set out any strategy or vision for managing the crisis. With regard to the Moroccan population, decisions taken hastily by the executive with no vision of the consequences were considered as mismanagement on the part of the Head of Government.

With this battery of measures, North African countries adopted strict containment measures in their fight against the coronavirus, reducing the effects of the pandemic, until another wave appeared in August. But after all, did these measures respect democratic standards? It is essential that the response to Covid 19 be in accordance with the fundamental principles

of democracy. In this context, human rights actors and NGOs have called for the monitoring of the implementation of these measures by public authorities, in particular in terms of respect for the legal approach. The Mediator for Democracy and Human Rights presented a report in which he attests that the battle against this dangerous and complex pandemic must respect citizens' freedoms. He demonstrates that in Morocco only, results of security checks revealed the activation of legal proceedings against 91,623 individuals for violating the state of emergency outside authorized situations and failure to wear a protective mask. Authorities have resorted to various intrusive containment measures: barricading neighbourhoods suspected of being infected with metal barriers, arresting people refusing to wear masks, and flying drones with loudspeakers to scold people coming out of their homes without masks.

Amy Slipowitz, co-author of *The Democracy under lockdown* reported that since the onset of the pandemic, democracy has weakened in 80 of the 192 countries studied by the NGO Freedom House⁶. This decline has taken different forms depending on the measures taken by various states and on the lack of clear and transparent information from governments on Covid 19. Abuse of power has taken on various forms, from arbitrary detention to violence against civilians, or detention of individuals violating the state of emergency. Some governments have adopted laws the provisions of which allow certain leaders to prolong the state of emergency indefinitely (such as Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Hungary) without seeking parliamentary approval, which will make it easier for them to repress their political opponents. Viktor Orban's regime does not exercise a dictatorship or follow a path toward authoritarianism, it does not use physical violence, but rather economic violence to silence all those who contradict his government. Political analysts fear that such scenarios occur in Morocco or Tunisia, which are both in a phase of democratic transition.

In Egypt, the government has taken lighter measures than Morocco's. In the context of preserving public health, a Resolution No. 768 issued on April 24, 2020 dealing with virus repercussions imposed a partial curfew on all Egyptian governorates to limit the spread of the coronavirus instead of containment.

Morocco's set of restrictions seemed extremely harsh, in the effort to protect the country, ensure national security and public health as top priorities. The state of emergency imposed drastic measures which do not comply with Articles 21 and 24 of the fourth paragraph of the Moroccan Constitution. Fines and convictions targeted individuals who breached social distancing and confinement imperatives. Moroccan authorities arrested people for "spreading rumours about the coronavirus", which is contrary to Article 25. Some critics denounced the harsh measures as an oppressive policy against democracy and violating human rights. Legislative Decree 2.20.292, allowed authorities to arrest people violating the state of emergency, and arbitrary arrests were reported, such as the Moroccan YouTuber Mi Naima, sentenced to one year in prison for spreading rumours about the Covid 19.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian government was severely criticized for its unwillingness to provide detailed data on the distribution of cases with coronavirus, whether data on the number of infected women, the elderly, or on the basis of the poverty level and number of infections by governorate⁷. According to the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, there are few available statistics on Covid 19-related deaths in Egyptian prisons. Despite the fact that the government transmitted several reports, they remain uncertain. According to Mary Lawlor, a special rapporteur on the situation on human rights activists, There are credible allegations that some Egyptian activists of human rights have been arbitrarily detained, forcibly disappeared or tortured simply for standing up for human rights.⁸ The same report outlines that Egypt is using Covid 19 as an alibi for proceeding to arbitrary detentions of several opponents to the regime in place. The government's method of detention and trials violates international human rights standards.

Meanwhile, critics have been addressed to Algeria in terms of non-conformity with democratic norms of measures put in place to fight the pandemic, serving as a pretext to end the Hirak, and to keep the regime's opponents in silence, such as the arrest of prominent journalists for "undermining national unity" and "damage to the morale of the army". Although the Algerian courts postponed some proceedings, they continued to deal with cases against anti-government activists. In Algeria, laws on terrorism have been applied to arrest journalists, block websites and the internet as well as people's access to information.

Overall, what we can highlight is that the state of health emergency proclaimed and approved by most states respects international human rights legislation. Therefore, the idea assuming that a state of health emergency declared in Morocco cannot be compatible with democratic values is not totally right.

According to Kevin Casas-Zamora, secretary-general of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the case of some North African states is well acceptable. Tunisia had not imposed any abusive measures. Most countries have used emergency powers in a reasonable way so far. Morocco, despite the intervention of the military and the circulation of armored vehicles in the streets, has in no way resorted to abusive arrests or threats against citizens. Leaders who are more autocratic might however want to take advantage of the situation to extend their powers, in countries such as Egypt. Democratic decision-makers though might maintain certain decisions because they consider them necessary, as in, the case of the anti-terrorism measures introduced in France following the Bataclan attack in November 2015, which have not yet been lifted, authorities claiming that the danger is still there.

We should not overlook the fact that most human rights are not as absolute as freedom from slavery and torture, but can be restricted with limitations. The latter were introduced as provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (articles 4, 12, 18, 19, 21, 22), and in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (6, 8, 9, 12), which sets the rights of individuals and highlights cases of restriction such as national security, public safety, public order, and public health or morals.⁹ According to the Policy Centre for the New South: "The containment measures outlined in the decrees adopted by the Moroccan authorities, seem fully in compliance with the limitations imposed by the texts on the enjoyment of these fundamental rights."¹⁰ The right to personal freedom is obviously impacted by the containment measures, especially for people tested positive to the virus and forced for quarantine, and deprivation of liberty, but not arbitrary under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In the same scope, Article 5 of the European Human Rights Convention (ECHR) admits "the lawful detention of persons for the prevention of the spreading of infectious diseases".

Kevin Casas-Zamora also emphasizes that the virus attacks those with already weak democratic defences, accelerating ongoing democratic regression processes. The governments' use of emergency powers is legitimate as long as their use is limited in time and they are subject to control by the Parliament and the judiciary. The apprehended risk is to come if certain States uphold the decisions taken even after the end of the pandemic. The problem is that some governments invoke a state of emergency without setting a deadline. When the state of emergency is applied, it is expected that there will be a reduction in freedom of movement, or even freedom of association. But the important thing is that governments maintain an acceptable level of these restrictions, that they are limited in time, that they are legitimate and not discriminating against certain groups.

Actually, Morocco and Tunisia are well-acceptable cases. Zamora highlights that most countries have used emergency powers in a reasonable way so far. Despite the intervention of the military and the circulation of armored vehicles in the streets, Morocco has in no way resorted to abusive arrests or threats against citizens. Leaders who are more autocratic

might however want to take advantage of the situation to extend their powers. In this prospect, some democratic decision-makers might maintain certain decisions because they consider them necessary, as the case has been for counter-terrorism measures introduced in France following the Bataclan attack in November 2015. These have not yet been lifted, because the authorities claim the danger is still there.

What democratic and hybrid countries have in common is a democratic political system and independent judicial systems that protect the rights of citizens. In authoritarian countries like China and Singapore, the denial of rights is encrusted in the regime and in people's minds. Both countries responded well to COVID 19 because on the one hand: it is much easier for the authorities to impose obligations and restrictions depriving citizens of their fundamental freedoms, since penalties for non-compliance with these restrictions are much more severe. On the other hand, because they had already experienced a similar virus (SARS) a few years ago and knew how to react and were familiar with the protocols to follow. The measures implemented by Morocco and Tunisia contributed to reducing the number of contaminations. According to Evan Gertsman (professor of political science at Loyola Marymount University in California), the majority of states put in place restrictions to fight the spread of the pandemic through surveillance powers, suspension of rights, control of information and postponement of elections.

In terms of supervisory powers, states adopted tracking techniques enabling them to monitor any individual. Thus, personal data was transmitted via Bluetooth applications in order to follow infected people and avoid any contact with them. However, some people fear that certain governments might use this power, and monitor the internet, online activities, and the movements of their citizens with a view to censoring them.

Following the data collected by governments, many countries suspended fundamental democratic rights such as freedom of assembly or protection against warrantless searches, while others such as Morocco, China and Egypt made it illegal for media and journalists to publish information about the coronavirus without prior government permission, with penalties ranging from blocking a news website to prison terms. Freedom of speech was also restricted, so that anyone posting misinformation about the pandemic on social media could face a prison term of up to six months. In a certain way, it is normal to censor all false information that might possibly affect keeping the pandemic under control, but sanctions should have been limited to payment of fines only, rather than imprisonment.

In the majority of democratic and North African states, measures implemented do not correspond to known democratic norms. However, exceptional circumstances necessitate exceptional measures. This is why leaders have taken drastic measures for the survival of their populations. To prevent the spread of a pandemic, governments can restrict basic rights and freedoms. This is in the public interest, but these restrictions must be controlled and time-bound.

In North Africa, measures taken by Algeria have served as a pretext to keep opponents to the regime silent, i.e. the arrest of a prominent journalist, the extension of the sentence of another for "undermining national unity" and/or "damage to the morale of the army", and summons to appear sent to dozens of activists. The government's actions amount to a crackdown on dissent, at a time when protests and marches remain banned due to the virus. Although the courts maintained some proceedings, they continued to deal with cases against anti-government activists. Tunisian authorities have arrested journalists, bloggers, activists, and others for having criticized the government's response to the pandemic.

In Hungary, vestiges of a dying democracy under the presidency of Viktor Orban, saw parliament approve a law on the indefinite maintenance of the state of emergency, under the pretext that one did not know when the pandemic might end. This would then allow him to annul the elections by decree, to punish information distributors such as journalists, and

to use surveillance techniques to track down individuals opposing his regime, which some call illiberal democracy while others call it autocracy.

To conclude, debating such a question is not easy in the absence of academic research on the topic. So that the current facts (in 2020), in consequence of decisions taken by certain governments, allow us to draw the picture of the global health crisis management. Since the beginning of this research, we have been able to dispute the rumour stating that authoritarian regimes manage to control the spread of the pandemic and that they will emerge from it. However, it is important to resign ourselves to saying that everything is not political, nor that everything is related to Confucian culture. Through this research, we were able to present counter cases that have destabilized the idea that authoritarian regimes are more effective than democracies and could emphasize that measures adopted by some North African states do not constitute a violation of human rights. In debating success or failure, we should not mention the authoritarian experience but rather the Eastern Asian experience, neither the hybrid model nor any other political regime. China, Singapore, (dictatorships), South Korea, Taiwan, Japan (democracies) Hong Kong: the common points between these states is that they share an authoritarian past hence a common culture which advocates collectivism, in a society with a strong sense of belonging to a community. Byung-Chul Han assumes that what democratic states and their people see as an invasion of their privacy is precisely what has enabled Asian countries to fight the health crisis at a lower human, social and economic cost. In addition, these countries have made an important leap in the field of artificial intelligence.

Taiwan and South Korea have not imposed forced confinement, preferring instead to rely on massive testing, the wearing of masks, digital monitoring, and tracing tools. However, there is an important element which is the experience acquired by these same States years before. The SARS-Cov virus, a precedent which had spread from China in 2002 to its Asian neighbours and other states, had caused thousands of infections and hundreds of deaths, particularly in the PRC, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Canada. This experience, hence that of Ebola and H1N1, has enabled these states to strengthen their medical and technological arsenal to face any sanitary crises. Since then, Hong Kong and Taiwan have acquired an excellent health care system, countless professionals in the field and specialized medical research laboratories. Add to this countless professional links between the health and public health systems in both countries.

Imposing measures involving deprivation of liberty or simply a tight control of society was required to combat the spread of a virus, and these were adopted by so many democratic regimes. So we cannot define a correlation between a regime being more or less authoritarian and the strength or effectiveness of its response to the sanitary crisis. As we have already stressed, effective policies are neither authoritarian, nor democratic, nor hybrid, nor ... whatever, everything depends on governance. To act as soon as possible, identify cases, isolate them, set up screening measures, otherwise apply containment as a fall-back measure cannot be implemented by any government without having repercussions. China's reaction pattern does not coincide with Brazil's attitude, or France's but rather with that of South Korea.

In the cases we have studied, authority and civic culture have made it unnecessary to impose sanctions to ensure that individuals respect confinement, social distancing, as well as wearing masks in the public space. In Japan, Taiwan, China, Singapore, and Germany these measures were implemented without the need for fines or arrests, as was the case particularly in Italy, France, Spain, and to some extent in Morocco. However, we can assume that Morocco comes out of this pandemic without great losses compared to Spain or Italy. As for complying with measures adopted in line with democratic standards, or all the more with respect for human rights, it appears that in agreement with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, a

majority of states, including Morocco, did not flout human rights excessively, while other rulers took advantage of measures adopted to silence opponents or to extend their power.

NOTES

1 A collection of discussions written by the disciples of Confucius; they encompass a study of wisdom, government, and state in Confucius's (Kong Zu K'ung) talks with his followers, with the princes and ministers of his day, which were written by his followers.

2 Chantal Delsol, French Philosopher, head of the Hannah Arendt Institute, member of the Academy of sciences and politics in 2007. Authored several books: *La haine du monde. Totalitarismes et postmodernité*, Cerf, 238, 2016.

3 Morocco known as a country with an hybrid regime.

4 Hynd Bouhia, 2020. *Le Maroc Face au Covid 19 Agilité, Cohésion et Innovation*. Accessed on <https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/le-maroc-face-au-covid19-agilit%C3%A9-coh%C3%A9sion-et-innovation>.

5 Building Resilience to the Covid 19. 2020. Accessed on: <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/building-resilience-to-the-covid19-pandemic-the-role-of-centres-of-government-883d2961/>

6 The Freedom House, a non-governmental organisation aiming to study the expansion of democracy in the world. It is financed by the American government and based in Washington.

7 MAAT for peace development and human rights, "protecting human rights during and after Covid 19".

8 وزارة الداخلية المصرية تؤكد أنّ موظف سجن طرة المتوفى كان مصاباً بفيروس كورونا، العربي
https://bit.ly/2BcF2dq الجديد، 31 مايو 2020، للمزيد على الرابط التالي:

9 The following rights: the right to respect for private and family life (Article 6 ACHPR), freedom to manifest one's religion or belief (Art. 8 ACHPR and Art. 18 ICCPR), freedom of expression (article 9 ACHPR and article 19. ICCPR), freedom of assembly and association (article 10 and 11 ACHPR and 21-22 ICCPR), and freedom of movement (Article 12 ACHPR and Article 12 ICCPR).

10 Abdesslam Jaldi, <https://www.policycenter.ma/opinion/coronavirus-does-state-health-emergency-morocco-comply-international-human-rights-law#.X8YmAc1KjIV>

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