The Origins and development of Arabism and the Arab Identity

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الملخص:

يتناول هذا المقال مفهوم الحس العربى القومى وعلاقته بالهوية العربية مركزا على أهم المحطات التى مر بها منذ النشأة فى العهد العثمانى قبل الحرب العالمية الأولى وبعدها، حتى تحول إلى نضال قومى يصبو إلى إقامة وحدة عربية قائمة على عناصر الهوية العربية الواحدة المتمثلة فى اللغة والثقافة والدين والرقعة الجغرافية المتصلة الممتدة من النهرين إلى المحيط الأطلسى. كما يتطرق إلى العوائق المؤدية إلى اضمحلاله وعدم توصله لتحقيق الوحدة العربية.

Abstract:

This article deals with the concept of Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism in terms of its rise and decline, focusing on its meaning and the factors which led to its emergence ever since the Ottoman Empire until now as well as the obstacles preventing Arabs from achieving the Arab unity despite their nationalism.

Introduction :

In attempting to define the Arab identity, one may ask the following questions: "who are the Arabs?" Have they always been one nation? What is Arab nationalism or Arabism? What role if any, did or can Arabism play in unifying the Arab nation?

According to (Duri, 1987), the Iranian Cuneiform writings of the Achaemenids applied the word ' Arab' to the Bedouins who inhabited the land extending from the Euphrates to Egypt.

As well, Greek and Roman writings used the word ' Arabia' to refer to the Arabian peninsula and its inhabitants while not limiting the land of Arabs to the Arabian peninsula and extending it as far as *" the southern part of Syria, the Sinai peninsula and eastern Egypt between the Nile and the sea"* (Duri, 1987:7).The current definition, however, applies the word '*Arab*' to anyone who speaks Arabic as his or her native language.

The word 'Arabic' which refers to the language spoken by Arabs was mentioned in many verses of the *Quran*. In his ' *Hadith*', the prophet Muhammad referred to 'Arab' to depict the town dwellers while he used Arabic to refer to the Arabic language which was spoken by both Bedouins and city dwellers.So, Arabic language was and still is a unifying medium of communication for the people who spoke it then and speak it now thus playing a crucial element in determining the Arab sense of Identity.

Arabs lived in dark ages called ' *Jahilyya*' when the prophet Muhammad was being inspired by the message of Islam. After embracing Islam in the seventh century, they started the propagation of the word of god ' the Islamic faith'. They

covered the whole of southwestern Asia, the whole of North Africa thus reaching the Iberia peninsula. As a result, the Muslim faith became a unifying factor among the peoples of the conquered lands thereby enabling them to adopt the language of Quran, Arabic as their *lingua franca*. Hence, Islam became the third element of unity after Arabic language and culture for the Arab Muslim Empire. Thus, albeit some Arabs remained Christian or Jews, Islam became the religion of the overwhelming majority of the Arabs and non-Arabs. Thus, one can conclude that Arabs have always been one nation.

However, the fall of the Arab Islamic Empire gave way to the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of a Turk Caliphate. The Ottoman Empire extended from Persia to Europe on the north and reached North Africa on the south. During the Ottoman rule, especially under *Solaiman* the magnificent (1520- 1566), the Arabs endured many sorts of oppression: heavy taxation, Turkification, racism and the like (Hoskins, 1954). This situation coupled with other political circumstances triggered some kind of revolt against the Ottoman Turks expressed in claims of administrative reforms, recognition of their language, culture and socio-economic rights (Duri, 1987).

These movements took a nationalist tone expressing the particularity of Arabs as the largest subject nationality of the Ottoman Empire and thus their right for some kind of political and cultural autonomy within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.As well, the Arab nationalist movement continued to be expressed even after the departure of the Ottomans but this time as a reaction to the colonizing European powers especially Britain and France and Western imperialism as a whole.

This nationalist movement was termed Arabism by some scholars. This article will trace the evolution of this concept ever since its emergence in the early nineteen century until now, the beginning of the twenty first century.

In order to deal with Arabism, this concept is going to be used as equivalent to Arab nationalism when it has to do with Pan-Arab affairs, this article will be divided as follows:

1- The definition of Arab nationalism and/or Arabism.

2- The origin of Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism.

3- Pre-World War I Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism.

4- The role of cultural and political societies in the spread of Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism.

5- Post-World War I revolutionary Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism

6- The decline of Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism.

7- The future of Arab nationalism   and/or Arabism

1- Definition of Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism:

Defining nationalism, Shafer, (1955: 6) argued that nationalism can mean various meanings:

 "1- *The love of a common social, race, language, or historical*

   culture.

  2-   A desire for political independence, security, and prestige of the nation.

3- *A mystical devotion to a vague, sometimes even supernatural, social organism which, known as the nation or " folk", is more than the sum of its parts.*

4- *The dogma that the individual lives exclusively for the nation with the corollary that the nation is an end in itself.*

5-*The doctrine that the nation (the nationalist's own) is or should be dominant if not supreme among other nations and should like aggressive actions to this end"* (Shafer 1955). While Shafer saw nationalism as a compound of all the latter definitions, Silver (1967:18) argued that the term nationalism is composed of four concepts:

"1- *The judicial concept has to do with the legal relationship between individuals and the state and among states internationally".*

2- The symbolic concept means the *" stock of patriotic symbols enveloping such common cultural characteristics as language, dress and food habits, and the expression of respect for familiar surroundings, the flag, the anthem, and so on",*

3- The ideological concept meaning*" those bodies of political thought concerning the characteristics of the nation, and the means to be employed for seeking national goals and for discriminating between state power and individual rights".*

4- The social value concept or nationalism *" in terms of the norm defining the loyalty due to fellow citizens and the activities of the state within the national society, and the internalized feeling of national community".*(Tibi:1981:90)

From the latter definitions, it is clear that nationalism "reflects *inwardly-oriented feelings and actions, and prejudice and discrimination against members of the out-groups*" (Makhlouf, 1970: 15). Arabism, however, is a larger version of Arab nationalism. That is, to say, an organized movement in the name of Arab people.

The Arab National Congress held in Jerusalem in December, 1939, defined Arabism as the desire of Arabs for the creation of an independent Arab entity that includes the various Arab countries (al-Solh, 2003), whereas Goldschmidt. Jr defined it as follows: "*simply put, it is the belief that Arabs constitute a single political community (or nation) and ought to have a common government*" (Goldschmidt, 1979: 181)

As well, Barakat argued that Arabism means the desire to feel and live the Arab national identity which comprises elements such as "language*, common culture, geography or shared history*" (Barakat, 1993:32). Thus, Arab nationalism or Arabism is all the activities and efforts exercised in order to regain the Arab sense of nationhood which is based on what is common among Arabs " *namely, language, culture, sociopolitical experiences, economic interests and collective memory of their place and role in history*" (Barakat, 1993:33).

2- The Origin of Arab nationalism and/ or Arab Arabism:

Nationalism in the name of the Arab people (Arabism) emerged first in Greater Syria (present time Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan). The Syrian nationalism based on Arabism was influenced by Turkish nationalism when a group of young Turkish intellectuals formed a movement oriented toward the importance of the political order in the Ottoman Empire.

According to Tibi, (1981:90), " *in the pre-colonial period Arab nationalism was formulated by the Syro- Lebanese Western educated intellectuals who sought to introduce liberal freedoms and bourgeois democracy on Western lines in the framework of secular Arab state…… to point to the existence of an Arab people who were different from the Turks by referring back to classical Arabic literature. Then equality and national cultural autonomy within the Ottoman Empire were demanded for this Arab nation. In both cases the advanced bourgeois society of the West was the model*". (Tibi, 1981:90),

As a result, Arab Ottomans regarded the 1908 coup carried out by the young Turks with high favor because they thought it will put an end to the old Ottoman regime and gave them hope for autonomy and political democracy. Unfortunately, this same Turkish movement shattered their hopes by embracing a program of ruthless turkification.

This kind of Turkish nationalism had a great effect on the transformation of Arab nationalism from mere demands for improving socio-economic conditions into a dynamic political program (Hoskins, 1954).Furthermore, Arab nationalism (Arabism) in Syria was also influenced by the establishment of French schools in Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Jaffa and Jerusalem. These schools were essential in inculcating the French revolution's ideals: freedom, equality, and brotherhood (liberate*, égalité et fraternité*) values which have been already conveyed by Islam. As well, American missionary schools, especially the Syrian Protestant College founded in 1866 which became later the American university of Beirut, had their important influence on the consciousness of the Arabs as a different entity.

Yet, North African nationalism emerged in quite a different framework from that of Egypt and Syria. While North African nationalism stressed Islam and Arabic language as its basis, other movements in the Middle East emphasized an Arabism limited to Islam or the classical Arabic heritage.This diversity of consciousness, which was the result of the prevailing circumstances in each part of the Arab world, led to the emergence of different trends of Arabism as will be shown later.

According to Tibi (1981:91), "Arab *nationalism underwent a change of direction. Arab nationalism, once Francophile and partly, anglophile, changed with the British and French colonization of the area and became anti-British and anti-French, and germanophile".* With regard to how Arab nationalism became germanophile, Tibi argued that "The *germanophilia of Arab nationalism originated partly with the Arab nationalist officers of Al-'Ahd, who were trained by German instructors, and who shared their germanophilia with the young Turks. These officers only took part in the pro-British Arab revolt after considerable hesitation, and the British ' betrayal' of the Arab cause once more strengthened their germanophilia, especially as German policy in the Middle East was always directed against British and French colonial intention in the area, and, was misinterpreted by the Arab officers as anti-colonial* (Tibi 1981:92),

In order to trace the emergence of Arabism, two periods will be considered: 1) - the pre-World War I period which has known three trends of nationalism and 2)- the post-World War I period in which the revolutionary Arab nationalism or Arabism has emerged.

3 - <u>Pre-World War I period of Arab nationalism</u> and / or <u>Arabism</u>

Threatened by western powers, the Ottoman Empire during the era of Abdulhamid II adopted a harsh policy based on highly centralized form of authority in order to prevent the emergence of separatist movements and all manifestations of intellectual awakening. By applying the centralization of administration that ruled Arab provinces from Istanbul, Abdulhamid strengthened his Pan-Islamic idea by the creation of the Islamic league (Al *jami'a al-islamiya*). By doing so, he thought he could buttress the empire in the face of western threat, on the one hand, and oppose any attempt aspiring for an Arab Caliphate, on the other (Duri, 1987). Sultan Abdulhamid invited Jamal al-Din al Afghani who is a proponent of the Islamic league and made him stay there surrounded by a group of *Ulama, shaykhs* and *Sufis* (Duri, 1987).

In addition, Abdulhamid appointed some of the Arabs in high ranking military and civilian positions and built a railway to Hijaz in the hope of winning the devotion of Arab Muslims. He also tried to apply the 1869 education law by founding government schools in the main cities in Syria (elementary and secondary levels in addition to military preparatory schools while putting private schools under government control (Duri, 1987). Adulhamid's developmental activities were motivated by:

- Suspicion and fear of missionary secondary schools.

- The need for civil servants, and

- The fear from the increasing level of Arab political consciousness of their rights as a different ethnic nationality, a matter that can lead to the separation of Arab provinces.

It is worthwhile to mention that these schools conducted their programs in Turkish and French while Arabic language received almost no attention. Ironically, Arabic was taught in private and foreign schools. Regardless of these difficulties, Syrian and Iraqi students who completed their secondary school levels pursued their higher education in Istanbul. By reaching more Arabs, education was a determinant factor in the awakening and intensification of the nationalist consciousness among Arabs.

Examples of this nationalist consciousness are the dissenting voices of Arab intellectuals such as Rashid Rida (d 1935) al- Kawakibi (d 1902) and al-Zahraoui (1916) whose nationalist activities were either secret or went abroad as a result of the Ottoman oppression.

All the latter activists called for administrative reform and more autonomy to be given to Arabs within the framework of the Ottoman Empire at first then shifted to call for Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East. As Duri put it: *" the Arab consciousness in the final quarter of the nineteenth century was thus at first inclined to call for the improvement of conditions in the Arab lands and for catching up with the march of civilization _ hence the tendency to favour decentralized administration or autonomy"* (Duri, 1987: 185).

The Arab consciousness was based on Arabist and Islamic tone advocated the use of Arabic and its cultural heritage in the Arab lands.

The gradual weakening of the Ottoman empire and the threat of foreign invasion of Arab countries by European powers (France's occupation of Algeria in 1830 and Tunisia in 1881, Libya by Italia and Egypt by Britain) triggered a debate among Arab intellectuals who focused on the issue of national identity, the

redefinition of the concept of 'umma ' and the awakening of Arabs and the struggle for the achievement of the *nahda* (renaissance). As well, issues like whether to pursue reform through science or religion and what are the directions for the future of Arabs and which western innovations could Arabs adopt without compromising their religion and their value orientations were widely debated (Barakat, 1993).

Pre-World War I witnessed the emergence of three major trends of Arab nationalism which are :A)- The religious or '*salafiyya*' (Pan-Islamism) trend., B)- The modernizing liberal trend, C)- the progressive or radical (Pan-Arabism) trend and the founding of many cultural and political societies which prepared the soil for political activism (Barakat, 1993: 242).

A)- The religious or *' salafiyya'* or Pan-Islamism trend:

The religious trend was composed of two factions:

1)-the traditionalists represented by the ' *ulama*' who worked for the Sultan as officials and advisors who enjoyed special privileges. The prominent figure of this trend is Abul-Huda al- Sayyadi who is an Arab form the Aleppo province. Al-Sayyadi worked as chief advisor for Sultan Abdul- Hamid.

2) - The reformers represented by Jamal- Eddin al-Afghani (1839-97), Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905) and Rashid Rida (1865- 1935). The latter sub trend diverged from the former in viewing the rejuvenation of the Islamic Caliphate.

The *sallafist* or Pan-Islamist trend as a whole advocated the rejuvenation of Islamic Caliphate "through *the return to the original sources and the purity of early Islam*" (Barakat, 1993: 243).

For example, Jamal Eddin al-Afghani (1839-1897) was the most prominent of the Islamic reformers. He called on "Muslims *to unite and reform Islam both as a religion and as a civilization"* (Barakat, 1993: 243) to stand in the path of the danger coming from Europe. Al-afghani offered two "contradictory *courses of action*" to remedy the sick Muslim community:

1) - He called for the "return *to the original sources of Islam*".

2) - *"The adoption of liberal European ideas and institutions, including western sciences, constitutional rule, communal unity, elections and national representation"* (Barakat: 1993: 244)

Thus, al Afghani and his student Muhammad Abdu used Islam as an anti-colonialist ideology which called for political action against Europe (Tibi, 1981:64). While .Accepting from Europe just "those elements of its civilization and culture which might strengthen Islam" (Tibi, 1981: 64). Like al-Afghani, Muhammad Abdu, an influential Egyptian reformer, who became an associate and student of al-Afghani feared the western wave for endangering the distinctive Arab Islamic character, hence he called for the assertion of Arab identity through the revival of classical Arabic defending it against regional dialects and the spread of foreign languages (Duri, 1987).

In developing an educational theory, Muhammad Abdu took into account the national awakening of the Egyptians thereby reducing al-Afghani's *" universal Synthesis of Islam with the European bourgeois idea of the nation to the smaller format of Egypt without giving up his opposition to the nationalists, even when their acceptance of Islam was not in doubt"* (Tibi, 1981:66).

Like his contemporary Muhammad Abdu, Muhammad Rashid Rida viewed the concept of Arab nationalism or Arabism as corollary to the concept of Islam and therefore returning to the early Islam necessarily meant an Arab revival. And by so doing, the revival of Arabic studies is an imperative task. For this purpose, the learning of Arabic was a must because its dissemination represents the realization of spreading and understanding of Islam. In view of the Turkification process, he declared that, in the long run, the welfare of Islam is best served by Arab independence (Duri, 1987).

Khayr Eddin al- Tunisi (1810- 1899) is another *" pioneering intellectual and statesman "* who expressed loyalty to the Islamic Caliphate and opposed the west while recognizing the need for western- inspired reform (Barakat, 1993: 243)

In his 1887 book, *" Aqwam al-masalik fi ma'rifat ahwal al-mamalik* (the straightest road to knowing the conditions of states), Khayr Eddin al-Tunisi tried to bring to the attention of the rulers and elite the dire need for modernization arguing that whatever can be of benefit for the *" umma*" such as the spread of science and learning should be adopted from Europe. As well, Muslims should not neglect "what *is praiseworthy in other civilizations"* (Barakat, 1993: 244).

These calls for reforms voiced by the latter Arab reformists, Jamal Eddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abdu and Khayr Eddin al-Tunsi fail on deaf ears because the Ottoman Empire was holding firm to its despotism policy based on Turkification. Instead, the latter calls often led to the execution of many of these reformers by the Ottoman regime.

B-The liberal trend:

The liberal trend emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century. This trend called for the replacement of the Islamic "Umma" with a nationalist *Umma*. That is replacing "*theocracy with secularism and a backward-looking orientation with a future-looking one"* (Barakat, 1993: 245).

The emergence of this trend was attributed to " *the encounter with the west and the adoption of European ideas"* as well as " *some internal developments and transformations within the Ottoman empire*" such as administrative decentralization, " *the appearance of local and regional autonomous*" ruling families like Muhammad Ali in Egypt, the spread of education, the revival of ethnicity and classical Arab culture, the intensification of the region's Integration into the European economic system, and the rise of middle class (Barakat, 1993:245- 46).

Some prominent figures of this trend were Sheikh Rif't al-Tahtawi, Ahmed Faris al-Shidiaq (1804-1887), Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1983), Yacoub Sarrouf (1852- 1927), Qassem Amin (1863- 1908), Sudqi al-Zahawi (1863- 1936), Ahmed Lutfi al-Syyid (1872- 1936), to name but a few.

Shikh Rifa'a Rafi al-Tahtawi is an Egyptian intellectual who sojourned in Paris from (1826 – 1831). He thus became familiar with French patriotism during his stay in Paris. As a result, French patriotic influence was evident in his patriotic writings which came out after his return to Egypt. This influence was apparent in his famous work *" Takhlis al-ibriz fi talkhis Bariz*" (the Purification of Gold and the Summary of Paris). Sheikh Tahtawi showed his *"interest in the French constitution and political system, including the concept of equality before the law regardless of creed and rank"* (Barakat, 1993:246).

" Tahtawi translated the French Anthem, la marseillaise and used the Arabic word *'Watan '* for the French word *patrie.* As well, he translated Montesquieu's Work " *Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence*" (Tibi, 1981: 6).

As well, in 1855 Sheikh Tahtawi published a collection of patriotic poems in which he praised the new ruler Said Pasha, and the Egyptian contingent which was sent to help the Turks in the Crimean war

This collection was followed by other patriotic poems in 1868 praising the returning Egyptian battalion from Mexico which formed part of Napoleon III expeditionary force (Lewis, 1994:77). Tahtawi mentions in his prose poems that "love *of the country is part of the faith*". For him, "*patriotism is the bond that holds the social order together to inculcate it in the young one of the primary purposes of education"* (Lewis, 1994: 77). Indeed, Tahtawi called on Egyptians to adopt "Egyptian *nationalism as an alternative to the religious umma"* (Barakat, 1993: 246).

Tahtawi believed that *"national brotherhood is most binding on members of the same watan".* As well, those who share the same *watan* abide by moral obligation to work together in order to "improve *and perfect its organization in all that concerns its honor and greatness and wealth"* (Barakat, 1993: 246).

Affected by the 1860 Lebanese civil war, Butress al-Bustani called *"for replacement of sectarianism with nationalism" (*Barakat, 1993: 246).

In line with his ideas, he worked very hard for the revival of knowledge and Arabic language. In fact, he authored an Arabic dictionary *(Al Muhit*) and an Arabic encyclopedia *(Da'irat al-ma'arif*).

In addition to these achievements, he founded a secular school called *al-Madrasa al-wataniyya* in 1860. This school was based on national rather than religious principles. In 1870, he created his fortnightly magazine *Al-Jinan* (the paradises) which carried the formula " *love of country is part of the faith*" as its motto. In his writings, *Al-Bustani* showed his loyal attachment to the Ottoman Empire while he spoke of his *watan* which is Syria as a province of the empire (Lewis, 1994: 79).

In 1847, assisted by the American missionaries and Nasif al-Yaziji, al-Bustani : founded the first literary society in the Arab world, *jam'iyyat al-Adab w'al-'ulum* (the literary and scientific society), whose members were exclusively Syrian Christian and European. In 1857, this society "*was superseded by al-Jam'iyya al-'Islamiyya al-Suriyya (the Syrian Scientific Society), which included Western-educated Muslims and Druzes as well as Christian among its members*" (Tibi, 1981:77).

In his publications, "*al-Bustani reminds his readers that they had once reached such a high degree of civilization that all Arabs, both Christian and Muslims, could look back on that period with feelings of national pride*"(40) (Tibi, 1981:77). In order to reach Arab unity, al-Bustani called for religious tolerance and the separation of religion from politics.

With regard to the other members of the liberal trend, Yacoub Sarrouf and Nimr Faris, after having been terminated from the staff of the American university of Beirut for mysterious reasons, they published two articles in their magazine Al-*Muqtataf*. The first article that appeared in 1885 criticized the university's policy which tended to impose "a *particular creed on its pupils*" rather than spreading

learning in order to show their disappointment at the university's neglect to teaching in Arabic language.

The second article was restricted to criticizing the American University of Beirut (A.U.B) for teaching in English, rather than Arabic thereby limiting the number and advancement of Arab teachers.

Another prominent figure of the liberal trend is Qassem Amin (1863- 1908) who dealt with Arab women's cause that is women's liberation. In his two books "the *liberation of women- 1899*" and "*the new woman, 1*901", he defended Arab women's rights basing his arguments on *"concepts of individual freedom and the right of free expression and beliefs"* (Barakat, 1993: 248).

C- The progressive Radical trend:

This trend, like the liberal movement, put the stress on nationalism and secularism but, in addition to these two principles, it adopts socialism. Figures representing this trend are Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi (1849- 1902), Shibli Shumayyil (1850- 1917), and Farah Antun (1874- 1922).

Al-Kawakibi wrote two books" *Tabai al-istibdad*" and" *umm al-qura*" whereby he diagnosed the ills of Islamic society, attacked political despotism of the Ottoman sultans and asserted the special role of Arabs in Islam. With regard to the special role of Arabs in Islam, he pointed out that revival of Islam and the unity of faith can only be achieved by Arabs (Duri, 1987).

According to Duri, al –Kawakibi was influenced by western views and concepts, especially those concerning democracy and patriotism *"but sought to*

apply these views to the problem of despotism in his own land and time" (Duri, 1987: 188).

Al-Kawakibi argued that when Arabs played a special role in Islam, early Islam was known for concepts such as *"justice, equality, deliberative consultations and the fundamental principles of political freedom"*. As well, during the time of Arabs *"Islamic government was based on principles of democratic administration, on popularism and aristocratic consultation, or deliberative consultation with the tribal notables"* (Duri, 1987: 188).

Al-Kawakibi argued that Arabs are a nation distinct from other Muslims which comprises the people of Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and North Africa. For him, Arabs are one nation because they share common elements such as descent, homeland, language and religion (Duri, 1987).

It is worthwhile to mention that Al-Kawakibi's writings have had a tremendous impact on the Arab consciousness and the rise of nationalist awareness among Arabs. Shibli shummayyil, the other representative of the progressive radical movement, embraced socialism as "an *ideology and program by following a specific materialist approach"* (Barakat, 1993: 250). Shummayyil saw *"science as the fundamental element which can revive society and liberate humanity from ignorance and fanaticism".* He considered religion as "a *product of primitive and superficial feelings and illusions and not of an advanced mind"* (Barakat, 1993: 250). Despite his view about religion still he defended it against Lord Cromer's criticism with regard to it.

Shummyyil argued that narrow definition of nationalism could be just as bad as religion in terms of being a divisive element rather than a unifying one.

The other representative of the progressive radical trend is Farah Antun who was known for his progressive views.   Indeed, his radical views were very troublesome for him for they put him in a conflicting situation *vis-a -vis* various groups such as other intellectuals, including his old friends like Muhammad Abdou and Rashid Rida, and the government. His journal *al-Jami'a* was censored and banned because of his radical views. In fact, the law of July 7th 1907 prohibited the establishment of societies and parties with political goals and nationalist names but nonetheless, organizations arose in secret.   In his many articles, Shummayyil defended science and socialism and sought "to *acquaint Arabs with key western thinkers, including Marx, Nietzsche and Tolstoy*" (Barakat, 1993: 250).

These trends led to the creation of cultural and political societies that paved the way for the emergence of revolutionary nationalism both in terms of expression of opinions and creation of either overt or secret societies. These cultural and political societies did not emerge until it was clear that:

1)- The Ottomans before and after the promulgation of the constitution was imposed, decided to go ahead with their centralized administration and the adoption of the policy of Turkification thereby preventing non-Turkish peoples and the Arabs from studying their languages.

2) - That the Ottoman Empire is no longer able to defend Arab lands against European powers since it has been losing its provinces one after the other.

Under these circumstances, a number of societies came into existence under the influence of what was written and published by Arab intellectuals here and there (Duri, 1987).

4-Te role of cultural and political societies in the spread of political consciousness among Arabs:

At the beginning of the 20th century, Arabs were influenced by two major views:

1) - the widespread Ottomanist ideology advocating the unity and Modernization of the empire.

2) - the Arab conception of themselves as a distinctive nation that has its own feature.

Both views, however, were influenced in their turn by what was going on in Europe. The primary goal of the nationalist Turks was the introduction of a constitutional government which will satisfy the aspiration of the minorities by granting them equality before the law and at the same time would accelerate the pace of modernization by pursuing a centralization policy in the Empire. The latter policy adopted by the Committee of Union and Progress (C.U. P) led to the Turkification of the other subject nationalities.

The 1908 C.P.U political program supposedly stipulated that equality, freedom in education to all citizens, regardless of religion or ethnic origin, would be guaranteed. This program stipulated also that the official language and the language of education would remain Turkish.

While this latter policy aspired for the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire, it however, undermined the right of the other subject nationalities to the learning of their native languages. This situation upset the Arabs who decided to move in order to spur some change. As a result, a number of cultural and political societies started

to emerge. According to Duri, *"Arab activity in societies began in the days of Abdulhamid, when the Arabs in Cairo established the Ottoman Shura Society to confront his tyranny. Others were involved in a secret organization that became a branch of the C.U.P in Damascus in 1906"* (Duri, 1987: 219).

Following are the well-known societies that were created in order to promote the Arab cause:

1) - The cultural Circle of Shaykh Taher al-Jaza'iri in Damascus *(founded in 1903 by young people influenced by the discussions held in the circle of Shaykh Taher al-Jaza'iri)*. Its aim was to study Arab history and Arabic grammar and literature and disseminate learning knowledge

2)- The Arab Awakening Society *(founded in 1906 by two former members of the cultural circle who moved to Istanbul to complete their higher education, with the cooperation of another two young Arabs who were there already)*. The aim of this society was " *to make educated young Arabs aware of their Arabness, and to call upon them to co-operate in the reform of Ottoman society, the wellbeing of which was a precondition to the well-being of Arab society*" and " *promote the felicity of the Arab nation and to restore its proud glory'. As expressed by its name, this society was seeing the national awakening of the Arabs. Like the cultural circle of Taher al-Jaza'iri, this society played a crucial role in the Arab nationalist movement"*

(Duri, 1987: 221).

3) - The Society for Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood *(founded in 1908)* sought to promote the Arab cause within the framework of the Ottoman empire while reaffirming the ability of each subject nationality to manage its own local affairs.

4) - The Literary Club, the Qahtanid Society (*founded on the wake of the abolition of the Arab- Ottoman brotherhood by the Arab youth of Istanbul*). Its creation was intended for social and cultural activities for Arab youth in outlook but worked " *to propagate the idea of Arabism among them".*

5) - The Qahtanid Society (founded as a secret organization in Istanbul in 1909). Its overall goal, like its predecessors, was the improvement of the living conditions of Arabs, initiating their awakening and perhaps gaining their independence if possible.

6) **-** The Covenant Society (*founded in 1913 by Aziz Ali al-Misri as a secret political society*. Its basic aim was the attainment of autonomous states for the subject nationalities of the Ottoman Empire and the freedom of each group in using its native language to be part of its identity while sustaining Turkish as the universal language for the empire.

7) - The Young Arab Society (*founded in Istanbul in 1909 but, became active only after its initiators went to Paris for the purpose of finishing their higher education*). The members of this society were most concerned about the backwardness prevailing in the Arab world and called upon the leaders of the nation to "*devote their lives to ways of awakening the nation from this backwardness. It advocated administrative reform (decentralization) and called for independence all together after the outbreak of the W.W.I"* (Duri, 1987: 226).

6-Post -World War I Period: **The revolutionary Arab nationalism and/ or Arabism:**

While the early period of Arab nationalism focused its attention on the revival of Arab identity and the awakening of the nation, within the Islamic Ottoman Empire albeit with some degree of autonomy through the founding of cultural organizations and intellectual debate over the meaning of the notion of nationalism (*umma, qawm'yya* and *wataniyya*), the second period was marked by revolutionary nationalism concerned with the confrontation with the western powers which divided the Arab lands as a result of the Sykes Picot agreement.

Thus, this period was marked by a new version of nationalism formulated by Sati' al Husri and Michel Aflaq. As the theoricians of the new version of Arab nationalism, they *«influenced the whole course of Arab political thinking until the beginning of the 1960's in a particularly effective fashion".* (Tibi, 1981: 90)

As the prominent figure of the new version of Arab nationalism, Syrian al Husri, who held many Ottoman administrative posts in the Ottoman Balkan provinces, carried out his studies in Paris, Switzerland and Belgium where he studied European national ideas and was particularly influenced by the theories of the German theories of Herder and Fichte. Al Husri was first attracted to the French idea of the nation but shifted his interest to study the work of German philosophers. His meeting with the French arabophobia General Gourand as a representative of Faical's kingdom during the French occupation to Syria in 1920 for negotiation aroused in him some sort of francophobia which made him anti-French colonialism. Unlike his fellow Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian nationalists, his feelings about French colonialism made him reject European values " *thus, he criticized Taha Hussein, the spokesman of Egyptian nationalism, and Salama Musa, the early Arab*

Socialist on the grounds that their sympathies for Europe led them to an initiation of everything European which almost become anti-Arab" (Tibi, 1981:93).

In his theoretical work, al Husri attempted to prove the existence of the Arab nation by borrowing his theoretical tools from European history (Tibi, 1981: 99). Al Husri was able to provide a theoretical foundation for the Arab nation on the basis of German Romanticism which distinguishes the idea of the nation from the state.

In line with this reasoning, the nation "*is seen in cultural terms*" whereas the state is considered *"mechanical and legal construction which is external to the nation*" (Tibi, 1981: 100).

Despite his great influence by the German idea of the nation, al- Husri also derived his theory from Ibn Khaldun notion of '*asabiyya*' thereby producing a synthesis between the German idea of the nation and Ibn Khaldun's notion of *'asabiyya'* which means in Ibn-Khadun's terms the bond that makes possible the solidarity of one group vis-à-vis other groups. As Tibi (1981: 114) put it " *for both al-Husri and Ibn-Khaldun ' man' is a political animal, and the sociability of men is expressed in a national bond, which is described as ' asabiyya'* "

Overall, this period was characterized by the rise of ideologies and political movements. In that, nationalism initiated the formation of political parties. Thus, many parties came into existence such as «the *Wafd Party in Egypt, the League of National Action and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in Syria, the al-Ahali Party in Iraq, the Destour Party and the independence Party in the Maghrib. In addition to these parties several Arab countries have witnessed the formation of communist and/or Islamic parties*" (Barakat, 1987: 251).

As well, North Africa has seen the emergence of other parties such as party of independence *(Hazb al-Istiqlal*) which was founded by Allal al-Fassi in Morrocco, the star of North Africa ' *Najm Shamal Afriqia'* and ' *parti du people Algérien'* which was founded by the Algerian Messali al-Hadj among Algerian workers in France in 1926. Further, the Tunisian militant Taher al-Haddad (1899-1955) founded the Trade Unionist Movement for the purpose of the struggle for Tunisia's independence and the Arab national renaissance.

The emergence of political parties was coupled with the publication of many scholarly works illustrating the revolutionary nationalism that marked this era. For example, in his 1925 controversial work, Abd al-Raziq, an Egyptian scholar, argued that: *"Islam did not impose a political order or form of government. The Caliphate, based on the incorrect belief that Muslim rulers since Abu- Bakr, the first Caliph, were the temporal representatives of god's Prophet, Muhammad, was nevertheless a political rather than a religious order. It had been in the interest of various rulers and Sultans to propagate this error among the believers.*

In the name of religion, they had tyrannized over their subjects, imposing on them a narrow understanding of religion, and restricting their critical judgment and all free inquiry concerning the most suitable political system. There is nothing in Islam, Razik Said that forbids Muslims to overthrow a system of government that had humiliated them over since they adopted it. Muslims are free to establish rules of government in keeping with the achievement of the human spirit" (Barakat, 1987: 252). These radical views were behind the expulsion of Raziq from al-Azhar.

Like his countryman Raziq, Taha Hussein in his turn, yet published another controversial work in 1926 in which he «questioned *the authenticity of the pre-*

Islamic Poetry that, along with religious texts, had shaped Arab cultural thinking. In his criticism of this literary legacy, Hussein propagated principles of reason and skepticism in contrast to the doctrine of faith" (Barakat, 1993: 252).

Yet, in another more controversial work about the future of culture in Egypt, Taha Hussein reached the most resented conclusion that " *Egypt was culturally affiliated with western rather than eastern civilization*" (Barakat, 1993: 253).

In addition, Taha Hussein argued that if Egypt wanted to progress it " *must follow the path of the Europeans so as to be their equals and partners in civilization- in good and evil, its sweetness and bitterness, what can be loved or hated, what can be praised or blamed"* (Barakat, 1993: 253).Furthermore, Ahmad Lutfy al-Sayyid (1872- 1963), a nationalist and modernization proponent, criticized traditionalism saying that " *man needs freedom no less than soul needs a body*" while defending the radical views of his fellow writers.

Other nationalists such as Amin Rihani (1876- 1940) called for Arab unity by separating religion from politics by saying: " *I am [a] Syrian Lebanese who believes in the separation of religion from politics because I realize that the obstacle to national unity is religious partisanship"* (Barakat, 1993: 253).

This kind of pan-Arabist movement is further claimed by Constantine Zurayk who believed that " *internal and external contradictions could be resolved only through secularism and the elimination of feudalism' which contributed to the formation of two oppressed classes: the spiritually crushed middle class and the materialistically crushed low class".* (Barakat, 1993: 254).

Abdul Hamid Ben Badis (1889- 1940), the founder of the Society of Muslim Scholars in Algeria, based his struggle against French colonizers on Islam and Arabic language adopting his well-known motto " *Islam is our religion, Arabic is our language and Algeria is our homeland*". Besides Abdul Hamid Ben Badis' Arabo-Islamic orientation, Perhaps the most well-known of these political parties was Algeria's F.L.N «national *liberation front*" (1954- 62) which represented the political and ideological facet of the ' *National Liberation Army'* which made France recognize the independence of Algeria in 1962.

Based on Arabism and encouraged by the independence of many Arab countries such as Iraq (1932), Egypt (1936), Lebanon (1943), Syria (1946) and Jordan (1946), The latter movements promoted Arab nationalism in the Arab world at large.Perhaps the most determining factors in the rise of revolutionary Arabism during this era were the emergence of the Arab League in 1945, al-Ba'th party in Syria in 1947 and Nasserism in 1952.

The organization of Arab league played its role in the rise of revolutionary nationalism because, ever since its creation by the Alexandria protocol on the 22 of November, 1945, it became the hot bed of Arab nationalism based on pan-Arabism. Indeed, since the Arab league pact became active in April, 1952, its aims were oriented toward the realization of:

- Joint defense and economic treaty between the Arab states.

- Promotion of cooperation to consolidate stability and security in the Arab countries.

- Provision of the means of welfare and development in the Arab countries.

- The strengthening of relations between member states.

- The coordination of Arab states policies in pursuit of cooperation between them.

- Safeguarding their independence and sovereignty.

- And committing itself to the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.

The Arab league charter was drafted by Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen but, the other Arab countries joined it after their independence. These stipulated aims however, were disappointing for the Pan-Arab nationalists who aspired for the creation of one Arab political entity rather than a political forum.

Despite the fact that the Arab league did not meet the desire of Pan-Arab nationalists, it provided a forum for the discussion of Arab problems (Manandhar, 1973). Moreover, «the *league charter does not, however, prevent or obstruct a more compact and effective unity between two or more willing parties holding membership in the league"* (Manandhar, 1973: 165). In this sense, the real aim of the Arab league was not the creation of one Arab state at the outset rather, it established several functional organization to promote cooperation among Arab states in various spheres , economic, military, telecommunication, social, cultural, transport, crime prevention etc…(Manandhar, 1973).

Thus, the Arab league role in unifying the Arab states did not have much significance due to the non-binding nature of its resolutions.

After the intellectual and the cultural nationalist and arabist movements, the Ba'th party, which evolved in Syria in 1947 from the merger of al-Ba'th al –Arabi led by Zaki Arsuzi, Harakat al-Ba'th al-Arabi led by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din

Bitar, and the Socialist Party of Akram Hawrani, took the leadership calling for the unification of all speaking Arab people in one powerful Arab nation. The Ba'th party emphasized Arabic language as the common bond between all Arabs. Michel Aflaq founded the Ba'th party in order to find radical solutions to the problems of the Arab world by the Arab nation itself without any external intervention whether on an international level or an internal panacea based on class struggle.

As a result, the main aim of the Ba'th socialist party concerning the achievement of comprehensive Arab political unity became later the desire of all Arab nationalists especially Jamal Abdul Nasser.

Indeed, Jamal Abdul Nasser has never been interested by the Palestinian problem until the day during which he discovered, on the battle front his Arab dimension through his contact with his fellow Arab soldiers and the scene of the Arab armies fighting side by side against one common enemy while defending one common interest of one homeland. It is during this Arabist setting that Nasser felt like he was defending his own home and his own children.

Thus, " *Nasserism was basically a vehement protest movement against three interrelated conditions: 1)- the presence of imperialism on Arab soil; 2)- the division of Arabic speaking people into a number of independent and semi-independent states; and 3)- the backward social, economic, and political system of most Arab countries" (* Omar Khairy, 1984: 47-48).

Thus, Aflaq and Nasser had the same feeling towards an Arab homeland, albeit the former was a theorician and the latter was a pragmatic man.

Nasser's July 26th, 1956 Canal Suez nationalization and the support he provided to the Algerian revolution transformed him into a hero in the Arab world. Thus, by

1954, Nasser already became the first figure of revolutionary Arabism. His revolutionary attitude was expressed in the following objectives which he set forth for the development of Egypt:

- Confronting colonialism

- Establishing social justice and democracy in Egypt.

- Specified the Egyptian identity as Arab first, African second and Islamic third.

- Favoring collective defense pact with all Arab states.

Unfortunately, despite Nasser's objective to establish social justice and democracy in Egypt, like in all Arab countries, it appears that these two aims were and still are far from being achieved due to lack of political democracy and lack of economic development compared to the high birth rate in Egypt.

Nonetheless and as a result of his revolutionary attitude, Nasser was considered by the west as Hitler of the Nile who should be eliminated. As well, because of his revolutionary actions such as the nationalization of the Suez Canal, his support for the Algerian revolution and all other decolonization causes, he became the enemy number one of Britain, France and Israel who launched an invasion against Egypt in 1956 to put an end to his threatening regime.

However, the political and diplomatic victory he won on the expense of the three invading countries boosted his image even further in the eyes of Arabs at large. His Arabism which was disturbing to the west and threatening to the very existence of Israel, led the latter to launch the June 1967 surprise attack soon after president

Nasser blocked the Aqaba canal and made the united nation's blue helmets leave.(Wafik, 1984)

On the practical level, pan-Arabism has been demonstrated by the unification attempts such as that of Iraq's Nuri Essaid Pasha who proposed a federal union which includes Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq in the early 1940's. Another practical attempt of unification between Arab states was that which united Egypt with Syria in 1958, a union which ended in 1962.

As well, other attempts of merger happened between Jordan and Iraq, Egypt and Libya, Egypt and Sudan, Tunisia and Libya. Of all these attempts, the only successful merger was that of Yemen which reunited its northern and southern parts.On a regional level, the Arab *Maghrib* Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council are other two examples of unification attempts towards comprehensive Arab unity.

Despite the progress made within these two attempts in terms of political and economic cooperation, they are still far from achieving their objectives because of the same obstacles that hampered the overall Arab unity which will be discussed later.These were only attempts but the so long sought Arab-Unity was never achieved because of various obstacles which contributed to the

Weakening of Arabism, and as a result, its decline as will be shown later.

6- The decline of Arab nationalism and/or Arabism:

Arabism reached its peak during the October 6th, 1973 Arab-Israeli war during which Egyptian and Syrian armies destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the Israeli army. During this war, the Arab countries, both headed by the so-called

"reactionary regimes» and the so-called "revolutionary ones ", stood side by side in imposing an oil embargo against the west which backs Israel firmly against the Arabs. Despite this show of unity, nobody can deny the crisis Pan-Arabism ideology is going through nowadays because, instead of progressing, Arabism has known a tremendous decline for many reasons. Some of these reasons have been summarized by Manandhar (1973: 178). According to him, the following aspects hindered the fulfillment of Pan-Arab idea:

-   Geopolitical and spatial factors,

-   Political factors,

-   Economic factors, and

-   The presence of non-Arab minorities

In terms of geopolitical and spatial factors, «the *strategic position occupied by the Arab people has led the world's great powers into contention for influence and control of the area. This contention has adversely affected the realization of the political idea of one Arab state, and has tended to divide the region into antagonistic spheres of influence"* (Manandhar, 1973: 178).

 Agreeing with Manandhar, Makhlouf (1970: 162) adds that*" The strategic location of the Arab world- at the crossroad between three continents- has contributed both to her economic wellbeing and political troubles. The area has traditionally benefited from its use as a route of East-West trade, but it has also been thrown into the mainstream of power play, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries, because of this favorable geographic location. Whoever controlled the Arab Middle East controlled the access to India and the other countries in the East* ".

With regard to the economic factors, the Arab lands control «vast *oil reserves which appear essential to the survival of the industrial nations of the Free World*". In fact, the Arab world controls 59% of the world's oil reserve on which the US depends in its oil supply. In addition to their dependence on Arab oil, the Europeans and the Americans «*have a huge private and public investment in petroleum exploration, drilling, marketing, refining, and transportation. ....Nearly 82% of the OPEC countries' oil production is owned by the eight big Western oil companies*" (Manandhar, 1973: 184-85).

Concerning the political factors, the Arab World was divided in the twentieth century into several political units with different regimes, a reality which became an additional obstacle to the idea of one Arab state. The republican states which were during the Soviet Union reign, committed to socialism except for Tunisia and Lebanon. The monarchical states are in their turn a sub-divided into kingdoms (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and now Bahrain) and sheikdoms (Kuwait, United Emirates, Qatar, and Oman). The latter regimes are known to be leaning towards the West while the former states are hostile to it.

Because each political system has its political philosophy, it is very unlikely that the Arab states can coexist in one political unity. Besides, the conflicting political systems of the Arab states, some of them are witnessing internal political instability (Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, Somalia and to some degree Egypt). These dissimilarities of political systems and internal political instability in some of the Arab states are likely to hinder any progress towards the achievement of the idea of Arab unity.

The other possible obstacle to the Arab unity mentioned by Manandhar(1973) is the linguistic minorities issue since unifying the Arab world may mean unifying a large number of the Kurds in Syria and Iraq and the Berbers in Algeria and Morocco. The unification of these two largest linguistic minorities in the Arab world, the Kurds and the Berbers, may give them a logical incentive to lean towards secession from the Arab world provided that their land and number will increase therefore entitling them for independence. This risk will lead to the loss of a great portion of the Arab lands. Indeed, Sudan m once the largest country in terms of area split into two independent states (non-Muslim African type Nubas in Southern Sudan and Muslim Sudanese in the north). Unlike these linguistic minorities, the Christian Maronites of Lebanon, despite their religious differences, are Arabist in tendency. Thus, they constitute no threat for the Arab unity. (Manandhar, 1973).

Like Manandhar, Speaking about some of these obstacles preventing the Arab unity, Barakat (1993) argues that the main obstacle to Arab unity resides in the lack of communication. According to him, this lack of communication can be illustrated in the " *process of economic disintegration*" since " *each country is being increasingly and separately-integrated into the world capitalist system*" as well as other difficulties between the Arab countries such as travel problem from one Arab country to the other and vice versa, and the policy of self-sufficiency pursued by each country in terms of culture, sustained by "*the strict process of censorship undermining cultural exchanges"* in terms of products of mass media and written literature. (Barakat (1993).

In addition, the 1979 Egyptian – Israeli Camp David accords which led to the expulsion of the biggest Arab country from the Arab league was determinant in

the decline of Arabism. As well, the 1980-88 Iran Iraq war did have some impact on the Arab united front since Syria and Libya supported Iran against Iraq. Perhaps the hardest blow of them all to Arabism was the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which led to the 1990-91 gulf war which resulted in the destruction of the incredible Iraqi military power. This conflict was behind the invasion of Iraq on the 18th of March 2003 under the pretext of disarming Iraq from arms of mass destruction which were never found until now.

The other obstacle is the desire of the United States of America to protect its ally, Israel by eliminating the remaining pan-Arabists after the disappearance of Nasserists such as Jamal Abdelnasser himself and Cornel Qaddafi, a Nasserist Arabist, the late Ba'thist, Syrian president Hafez Al Assed who were experiencing an acute harassment by the United States of America, the main sponsor of Israel. Indeed, Qaddafi was allegedly accused of training terrorist groups by the USA and as a result, was attacked by former US president Ronald Reagan and later exterminated during the Libyan revolution by the allies.

Syria's president, like his late father, Hafez al-Assad, is in his turn accused of giving safe harbor for the so-called Palestinian "terrorist" groups in the US's terms and supporting *Hazbollah*. With regard to Saddam Hussein, he has been eliminated under the pretext of possessing weapons of mass destruction which was never found as was mentioned earlier

Speaking of other factors contributing to the decline of pan-Arabism, Lewis argued that: *"the decline of pan-Arabism was probably accelerated by the discovery of oil in some, though by no means all, Arab countries, and the consequent uneven distribution of the newly acquired wealth……. Another reason for the decline of*

pan-Arabism has been the Arabs' increasing disillusionment with successive attempts to achieve it. All too often, it seemed that the real objective of the pan-Arabism leaders was not so much unity as hegemony. Some chose a German model, each seeing himself as Bismark and his country as Prussia, with a dominant role to play in the United Arab State. Others chose a revolutionary model and tried to displace their fellow Arab rulers by subversion" (Lewis, 1994:97)

Bearing in mind the foregoing obstacles, incidents and U.S practices in the Middle East and in spite of their common language, culture, religion, past glory and way of life wrapped all together with pan-Arabism, Arabs failed to achieve their long sought goal of a united Arab state. Thus, one can conclude that these very obstacles, incidents and US practices represented a direct cause for the stagnation and later for its decline of Arabism.

7- The future of Arabism:

Indeed, despite these factors which greatly harmed Arab nationalism based on Arabism, Palestinian *Intifada* is one element which makes the Arab unite if not physically at least in opinion for it is a major unifying element essential to the Arab countries because it reflects " *the common opposition to Israel, a fact around which the Arabs can rally*". As well, the emerging threat coming from the western hemisphere (i. e, the American hegemony and its interests in reshaping the map of the Arab world to reach its ultimate goal of globalization as a new tool for the American hegemony on the world) requires the Arabs to raise their voice as one if they want to survive socially and economically.

In the era of one tailed world, Arabism is just as needed now as at the time of the Ottoman Empire or western colonialism in order to confront the new

American military and economic interests in the region. Thus, Arabism is the very incentive that will enable the Arabs to make tremendous effort as one social and cultural entity in order to preserve their cultural identity against the more than ever spreading cultural globalization. This does not mean that Arabs should unite in one state necessarily but, close cooperation between Arab states in all aspects of life can mean a new version of Arabism based on close cooperation between the Arab countries (Dawisha, 2003).

If the political union was not and will not be achieved, the economic union can be possible. Indeed, the economic cooperation among Arab countries is a must in the era of globalization. As separate economies, the Arab countries will be marginalized since the very economic aim of globalization is the integration of economies. Aided by the abundance of their oil and other natural resources, if integrated, the Arab economies can benefit greatly from globalization otherwise they will be removed out of the way by the strong economies.

In fact, economic cooperation between the Arabs is more than ever needed in order to put an end to their economic dependency and to overcome the problems of unemployment to meet the needs of one of the fastest growing birth rate in the world in terms of jobs, economic opportunities and social welfare. But, in order to be able to achieve this economic cooperation based on a new economic development strategy, the following conditions, as has been observed by Arab scholars, must be met :

-   Development in the Arab world has to be a process of civilizational evolution.

- Development in the Arab world has to be a reality that improves Arab people's lives.

- Arab economies and the Arab mind have to be liberated from dependency.

- All challenges facing the Arab world have to be confronted efficiently.

- Factors of stability for economic development must exist.

- Transformation of infrastructure having to do with the process of economic production and the development of social and cultural institutions based on pan-Arab strategy as well as flexible labor and investment laws must take place.

- The weaknesses present in the productive performance in areas such as services, education, training, agricultural products, social welfare and health care must be eliminated.

- Private sector and foreign investment on a large scale must be encouraged.

- Provision of true democratic participation in the political agenda of the Arab states thereby enabling the return of exiled Arab experts to participate democratically in the development of their Arab nation.

Conclusion:

The aim of this article was to define Arab nationalism or Arabism as the political incentive for the Arab identity and find out its origin as well as its role, if any, in the Arab unity. In doing so, the author tried to shed some light about who are the Arabs and concluded that the word "Arab" was applied at first to the Bedouins who inhabited the land extending from the Euphrates to Egypt. Then, the concept was extended to include all the people who spoke Semitic language and were arabized by Islam thereby contributing to the formation of Arab civilization from the Euphrates on the East to North Africa on the West.

With regard to Arab nationalism or Arabism, the afore discussed literature agree that Arab nationalism "is *the belief that Arabs constitute a single political community or nation and ought to have a common government"* (Goldschmidt, 1979: 181).

As a result, one cannot talk about nationalism, which is in reality the fact of showing one s love towards his country and all what distinguishes it from the other, unless there is some threat directed against the country or one of its constants (I, e culture, language , religion or economy.

Arab nationalism was initiated by the contact of Arabs with the west and could not have emerged if the very existence and the Arab unity were not threatened or endangered by both the Ottoman socio-economic and political practices and the western encroachment of Arab lands.

Despite their tense nationalism or Arabism, Arabs failed to achieve their long sought goal of united Arab state. As a result, Arab nationalism or Arabism will not have any role in the future in unifying the Arab countries because, it no longer means to the Arabs, "*the desire to create one single state*» as it used to, few years ago. Rather, it only portrays the sense of belonging to the same cultural and linguistic identity and the awareness of their common interests even as separate political entities.

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