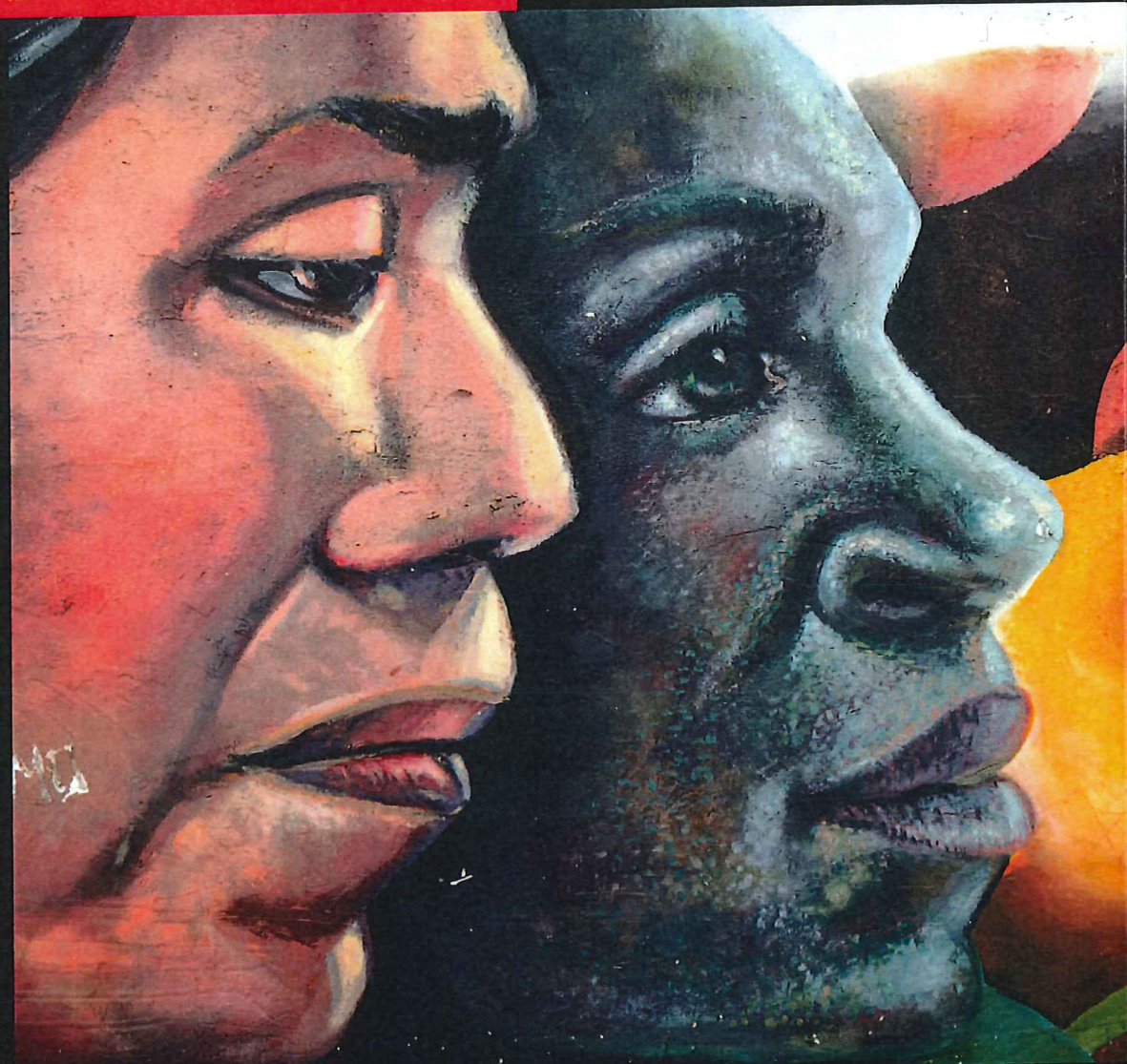


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# Routledge Handbook of South–South Relations

Edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Patricia Daley

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"Within the complex topographies of global power relations and the struggles for more just ways of life, this book restores vitality to the notion of many 'Souths' through a comprehensive exploration of relations of all kinds—which in turn substantiate different ways of being in the world."

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South–South cooperation is becoming ever more important to states, policy-makers and academics. Many Northern states, international agencies and NGOs are promoting South–South partnerships as a means of 'sharing the burden' in funding and undertaking development, assistance and protection activities, often in response to increased political and financial pressures on their own aid budgets. However, the mainstreaming of Southern-led initiatives by UN agencies and Northern states is paradoxical in many ways, especially because the development of a South–South cooperation paradigm was originally conceptualised as a necessary way to overcome the exploitative nature of North–South relations in the era of decolonisation.

This handbook critically explores diverse ways of defining 'the South' and of conceptualising and engaging with 'South–South relations'. Through 30 state-of-the-art reviews of key academic and policy debates, the handbook evaluates past, present and future opportunities and challenges of South–South cooperation, and lays out research agendas for the next 5–10 years. The book covers key models of cooperation (including internationalism, pan-Arabism and pan-Africanism), diverse modes of South–South connection, exchange and support (including South–South aid, transnational activism, and migration), and responses to displacement, violence and conflict (including Southern-led humanitarianism, peace-building and conflict resolution). In so doing, the handbook reflects on decolonial, postcolonial and anticolonial theories and methodologies, exploring urgent questions regarding the nature and implications of conducting research in and about the global South, and of applying a 'Southern lens' to a wide range of encounters, processes and dynamics across the global South and global North alike.

This handbook will be of great interest to scholars and postgraduate students in anthropology, area studies, cultural studies, development studies, history, geography, international relations, politics, postcolonial studies and sociology.

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# The rise and fall of pan-Arabism

*Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou*

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## Introduction

Between the late-middle of the 19th century and the late-middle of the 20th century, pan-Arabism rose and fell. Constitutive of both a discourse and a practice, seeking to unite Arabs across the boundaries of the different Arab states that were fought for during colonialism and established between the 1920s and the 1970s (Jordan became independent first in April 1921, as the Emirate of Transjordan, and the United Arab Emirates were formed last in December 1971), this ideology profoundly and lastingly impacted the Arab world. Though forcefully pursued during that period, expressed at both elite and street level and embodied in a series of attempts at formal unification by several of these states – notably under the form of the United Arab Republic (*al Jumhuriya al 'Arabiya al Mutahida*, UAR), which for three years (1958–1961) merged non-contiguous Egypt and Syria into one single state – pan-Arabism was ultimately inconclusive and remains elusive. Its appeal subsisted after the 1970s, and yet, in effect, since then it has lost its mobilising force and appeal as a political project in the region, raising the question of whether it was essentially but a phase in the political history of the region.

For all its important links to Arab nationalism, of which it is a derivative ideology, pan-Arabism is, however, ensconced in a larger history of the global South. Specifically, the particular experience of that Middle Eastern and North African nationalism was illustrative of both a moment and a method of uprising in pursuit of national liberation from colonialism. That point in time and that disposition were equally representative of consequential self-empowering efforts at South-South engagement which were, nonetheless, ultimately only half-born and which strikingly lost momentum early on in the postcolonial era after the 1960s.

What then, we might enquire, was pan-Arabism, what drove it and why did it vanish? Benefiting from the correlation of a three-tiered set of distinct phenomena – the legacy of the European age of romantic nationalism in the 19th century, the anti-colonial struggle gathering momentum at the turn of the century, and the desire of most Arabs to rebuild their lost past grandeur as decolonisation struggles forged ahead – pan-Arabism functioned in a 'perfect storm' type of logic. The movement then took significant steps in the 1940s and 1950s to encapsulate its ideology in pan-Arab structures both at the regional level – notably with the establishment of the League of Arab States in 1945 – and at the level of several bilateral and sometimes trilateral

country arrangements, only to encounter decisive limits triggered by the increasing political provincialism of those leaders professing it, the inability to connect the ideology with wider and more urgent socio-economic issues and other non-Arab political struggles and, eventually, the debasing of Arab solidarity itself as well as the rise and perpetuation of so-called cold wars between the region's different regimes. Pan-Arabism remained, nonetheless, a powerful narrative, which was able to sporadically grab the imagination of Arab societies and at times move them anew in the 1980s and 1990s and indeed in a different form during the 2011 Arab Spring – never, however, doing so with the acuity it displayed in its early days.

### Genesis

The early 20th century witnessed a great deal of uncertainty and repositioning of identities in the Arab region (Gelvin 1999). The commonly portrayed stories of (Arab) nationalism and (Islamic) religion played out alongside other types of tribal and warrior mobilisation, both with equally deep roots in the region's history. The Arab world entered the modern age, however, transitioning directly from empire to absolutist state (Birdal 2011) and into colonialism. Arguing that 'in an age of nationalism, there is, in fact, a powerful drive by identity communities to attain a state and by state leaders to forge a shared national identity amongst their populations', some have, therefore, advanced the idea that 'the relative incongruity between state and identity is perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Middle East states system' (Hinnebusch 2005, p. 153). Efforts at grouping Arabs transnationally have indeed historically been both enabled and marred by the very definition of what constitutes an Arab. The ambiguity as to what is an Arab has allowed for vast groupings of peoples across the Southern hemisphere, but ultimately that lack of clarity has been an impediment in terms of the tangible common 'nation' aspect of the ideology. Arab identity's *differentia specifica* among other nationalisms is that, with eminent ethnic and geographical diversity in the Arab world, Arabhood was in effect defined linguistically. As Albert Hourani remarks in the opening pages of his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (1962):

More conscious of their language than any people in the world, seeing it not only as the greatest of their arts but also as their common good, most Arabs, if asked to define what they meant by the 'the Arab nation', would begin by saying that it included all those that spoke the Arabic language.

(Hourani 1962, p. 1)

The Arab nationalism ideologue Sati al-Husri remarked famously in that sense:

Every Arab-speaking people is an Arab people. Every individual belonging to one of these Arabic-speaking peoples is an Arab. And if he does not recognise this, and if he is not proud of his Arabism, then we must look for the reasons that have made him take this stand. It may be an expression of ignorance; in that case we must teach him the truth.

(Dawisha 2003, p. 72)

Expanding Arabism to join countries in an ideological project carried in its DNA this limitation whereby immediate connections were possible (language) but not lasting ones (the given experience of a nation). The term pan-Arabism itself does not appear as such in Arabic and, instead, the phrases *al qawmiya al 'arabiya* (Arab nationalism), *al wataniya al 'arabiya* (Arab patriotism), *al wihda al 'arabiya* (Arab unity), *al ittihad al 'Arabi* (Arab union) and *al 'uruba*

(Arabism or Arabhood), are used interchangeably in both the literature and political debate to convey that meaning.

Over the years, discussion of pan-Arabism has, unsatisfactorily, seesawed between a meta-narrative overemphasising the role of Arab elites and micro-narratives of local experiences, now overplaying the former, now excessively correcting it in favour of the latter (Khalidi 1991; Khoury 1997). Early texts highlighted the notion of 'awakening', 'renaissance' and 'making of' personal stories (such as those of the early Arab nationalism ideologues, Rifaa al-Tahtawi, Abdelrahman al-Kawakibi and Sati al-Husri) (Antonius 1938; Haim 1962; Clements 1976). A second phase during the interwar years was looked at in terms of a (linear) 'emergence' of the movement (Dawn 1988). Eventually, the re-examination of the Arab nationalists' experience over the following decades focused on a dynamic of 'invention' (Coury 1982) and, later, more critical inquiries (Tibi 1981). Suffering the larger triple problematic issues associated with Orientalism (including self-generated Orientalism), the absence of a comparative perspective, and the exceptionalism of 'Middle East studies', what has been missing in such a discussion of the meaning of pan-Arabism is a *historicisation of its trajectory*. For to be certain, Arab nationalism was elite-driven but pan-Arabism equally became much more of a popular, and at times populist, movement. The very nature of its starting point, namely an ardent desire for rupture from foreign control conceptualised by a vanguard with a referential to Arab history that starts with the end of *jahiliya* (the 'ignorance' age which Islam brings an end to in the seventh century) and skips to the modern age, was a recipe for such evolution of an ideology that could be moulded any which way. Moulded and modulated it was, as the early aristocratic discussions of the first-generation Arab nationalists in the 1910s (best embodied in the Damascene experience of blue-blooded Prince Abdullah, son of the Sharif Hussein bin Ali of Mecca, liaising, circa 1913, with the secret Al 'Ahd (Covenant) society of Iraqi officers plotting both the overthrow of the Ottomans and the unification with Syria) gave way a quarter of a century later to a third generation springing from the peasantry and the working class to produce Ba'athism and Nasserism. (In a further indication of the importance of the Arabic language in pan-Arabism, the newsletter of Al 'Ahd was entitled *Al Lisan*, the tongue, as in the mother tongue of the nation.) In between, a middle-class generation (Michel Aflaq, Constantin Zureiq and Zaki al-Arzusi) would represent the thinkers setting the intellectual architecture of the pan-Arabist project.

If Arab nationalism was, then, initially elite-driven it is because the only way these early actors could connect was through elite channels enabling travel and exchange in privileged circles. However, Hejazi, Levantine, Cairoite and Maghrebi elites also spoke the same modernising language and set of ideas because they had been formed in the same Westernised matrix. Paradoxically, pan-Arabism – a distinguishing feature of which was rejection of Western ways – was in many respects influenced by European ideas of nationalism, in particular Johann Fichte's 1808 'Address to the German Nation' and Giuseppe Mazzini's Italian Risorgimento movement in the 1830s. A century later, different strands of European nationalism influenced Arab actors, and these included liberal nationalists in the United Kingdom and France as well as Fascists in Italy and Germany. In time, the Arab military was the natural recipient of these shaping forces, notably in Iraq and Syria where a series of coups, starting in 1936 in Baghdad, kick-started the era of the *mukhabarat* and *istikhabarat* police state in these two states and across the region.

A double reaction to Ottoman and then Western occupation, Arab nationalism – soon growing into pan-Arabism – carried a further specificity beyond the emphasis on language and the decisive influence of its nemesis. Lacking a clear and distinct fatherland was problematic for a burgeoning ideology based on *patria*. If, in time, Egyptian President Gamal abd al-Nasser came to unambiguously and unanimously embody pan-Arabism, pan-Arabism itself, as an ideology distinct from its best representative, did not have a centre. Was it Cairo or Riyadh? Baghdad

or Damascus? Algiers or Rabat? Indeed, should it be in the Mashreq (the Arab East) or the Maghreb (the Arab West), and what of the Nile Valley and its claim to being *um a dunya* (the mother of the world)? Where pan-Arabism was strong was on that dimension of nationalism that forcefully gives shape to it, namely memory. Yet the antecedents for nationalism in the region were religious and imperial, rather than republican and national. Moreover, and problematically for their project, pan-Arabists could not establish exclusive reference to those memories of the Arab-Islamic golden age, as the Islamists could also, and indeed with more legitimacy than the secular and Marxist-influenced nationalists, claim the same narrative. Though a continuing debate on that question would pit nationalists vs. Islamists for decades (Farah 1987), ultimately the collective consciousness of most Arabs was about Islam and the collective consciousness of most Muslims diminished the importance of Arabhood (homeland for the *umma* is anathema to universality and Mecca and Medina are merely holy 'sites'). As such, Arab nationalism had to find its operative anchor in something else. That amorphous '*uruba*' feeling would be given form, with difficulty, and calls for unity would come by way of the wider Southern narrative about self-determination, independence and sovereignty.

Similarly, the 'Arab nation' could not also claim to reconnect with an earlier moment in modern history where it had already been fleshed out. Although the Ba'athists, for instance, would later speak of a 'fatherland' or 'motherland' (borrowing European nationalist phraseology), one nation in the Arab world never, in fact, existed as such except under an Islamic configuration. Moreover, the Arabs were also fighting another ideology, Zionism, which precisely was striving for a homeland of its own, and, as a result, Arab nationalism ended up often modelling itself, in a further paradox, in the image of its Jewish enemy (Palestinian terrorism of the 1970s was prefigured by Jewish terrorism in the 1940s). Absent a territorial political contiguity, the movement would relate to a notion of bridging 'common spaces' but was nevertheless devoid of a so-called territorial community of nativity.

If it was weak in such respects, pan-Arabism was, however, among the strongest forms of anti-colonialism. It is no surprise that its heyday corresponded with an eminently anti-colonial step taken by Nasser's stance in 1956, nationalising the Aswan Dam, resisting the British and French assault and revealing these to be naked colonial powers. In *not losing* to them, Nasser had won and this dynamic captures the essence of pan-Arabism; namely resistance (although Nasser started, soon enough, talking of 'Arab solidarity' as the basis of Arab nationalism) (Al Jumhuriya al 'Arabiya al-Muttahida n.d.). As such, pan-Arabism, for all its claims of historical lineage, was an eminently contemporary phenomenon, and indeed a modern one. Such an organic connection with its present enabled it, however, to forge ahead strongly as an eminently anti-colonial movement, as a modernising force and as an enabling national actor – uniting to avoid losing (Khalidi *et al.* 1991) and coming together to create rather than *recreate* a state.

## Links

Once the colonial architecture had provided the context for the deployment of pan-Arabist feelings in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, a 'search for Arab unity' (Rejwan 1958; Porath 1986) took place until the middle of the 20th century. In Iraq, for instance, the rising power of the nationalists drove Britain to sign a treaty with these new political actors in that country (alongside Hashemites and local tribal leaders), instead of attempting to administer the country under the terms of the Mandate System, which had been agreed in Paris in January 1919 (Dodge 2003, p. 22). Following on the primacy of the language, the elevation of the nationalist project was particularly enabled by education and the place afforded to it by most pan-Arabist thinkers from the 1920s onwards.

The Sana'a-born, Istanbul-raised, Syrian educationalist Sati al-Husri, in particular, would play a key role in that respect, notably in serving as Minister of Education of Iraq and forming a whole generation of Iraqis who then led the military into the nationalist era imbued with ideas of uniting the Arab world.

The more formal pursuit of pan-Arabism was, however, through the project of the League of Arab States, an initiative that, arguably, came quite early. Founded in March 1945 by the six Arab states that were nominally independent then – Transjordan (1921, which became Jordan in 1946), Egypt (1922), Iraq (1932), Saudi Arabia (1932), Lebanon (1943) and Syria (1944), with North Yemen joining in May 1945 – the League had been the subject of formal meetings across the region since 1943. Running parallel to the elite approach, the statist 'Arab League', as it would come to be commonly known thereafter, echoed the same dynamics witnessed earlier. Two formative logics came together; on the one hand, the formation of these Arab states was itself an 'organic' project establishing a relationship with alternative sites of power (primarily the tribe or *'ashira*). On the other hand, the intensifying diplomatic exchanges between the new states (ultimately representing 22 countries), were the expression of a reaction to colonial arrangements, subsequent strategic calculations, division into different political camps and lasting alliances and counter-alliances. Time and again, unification and foreign control ran side by side (Mohamedou 2016).

As a set of social relations, pan-Arabism could function and transcend borders as it meant to positively empower. Shiites and Kurds in the Levant, Copts in the Nile Valley and Berbers in North Africa were not necessarily opposed to the idea of Arab nationalism and indeed, at times, were sympathetic to it. Famously, the co-founder of the ultimate expression of pan-Arabism, the Arab Socialist Ba'ath party in Syria and Iraq, was a Christian, Michel Aflaq, and the long-serving foreign minister of Ba'athi Iraq was a Chaldean Catholic, Tariq Aziz (born Mikhail Yuhanna and baptised Manuel Christo). Indeed, the more heterogeneous the Arab society, you could say, the stronger the pan-Arabist calls were. Initially, however, in their approach to army-building, both of the major imperial powers in the Middle East and North Africa – Britain and France – favoured the recruitment of minorities. This minority identification with empire, and the consequent alteration in their power relations with the majority community, had the inevitable corollary of worsening ethnic and sectarian tensions across the region (Cronin 2014). Berbers (in Morocco and Algeria); Assyrians and Kurds (in Iraq); Christians, Circassians, Druze and Alawis (Syria); and Copts (Egypt) all empowered by the colonial powers, Sunni Arabs always a minority in the rank and file. That power, too, was pitted against the power of the notables and these networks developed control of key positions and a narrative about the boundary-effacing nation. Yet this *divide et impera* logic proved ultimately beneficial to pan-Arabism which was able to subsume these identities into an all-encompassing ideology of Arabism, expressed often by actors from those minorities. The Palestinian issue additionally provided the core of the set of issues that could be pursued jointly (Woolbert 1938) and, indeed, enabled a wider set of connections toward the Muslim world, notably with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC, renamed Organisation of Islamic Cooperation). For all its appeal and ideological transcendence, the Palestinian state-building project was, however, predicated on a specific national struggle which followed its own dynamic from armed struggle to peace process (Sayigh 1999), and as such, its blending with pan-Arabism could only be limited.

It was *politically* therefore that pan-Arabism was pursued. Between the mid-1940s and the late 1970s, the ideal was pursued throughout the region with no less than 18 instances of voluntary unification attempts between Arab states: Iraq–Syria (1946, 1949, 1963, 1978, 1979), Jordan–Iraq (1946, 1951 and 1958), Egypt–Syria (1958–1961), Egypt–Syria–Iraq (1963), Libya–Egypt (1972), Egypt–Libya (1973), Libya–Tunisia (1974), Libya–Morocco (1984), Libya–Sudan (1988), and



North Yemen–South Yemen (1972, 1979 and 1990). One of those efforts constituted, in effect, the only success of pan-Arabism, with Syria and Egypt becoming de jure one single state from 22 February 1958 to 28 September 1961 known as the United Arab Republic (UAR) with its distinct flag. Indeed, the UAR went on to pursue its own pan-Arabism within pan-Arabism by striking a formal unity scheme with the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen in 1958; an alliance known as the United Arab States (UAS). In 1971, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were born as a result of a federation of seven previously separate emirates (Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujaira, Sharja, Ras al Khayma and Umm al Qaiwain). In September 1971, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi proposed the creation of a Federation of Arab Republics, *Itihad al Jumhuriyat al 'Arabiya*, which initially included Libya, Egypt and Syria and to which Iraq and Sudan were invited. The proposal was submitted to referenda in the different states and continued to be on the table until November 1977. Importantly, these efforts were pursued by actors from different political spectrums, republics and monarchies alike (indeed the Jordan–Iraq attempts were intra-dynastic as they concerned different branches of the Hashemite tribe). The final configuration of pan-Arab unification attempts took place in the 1980s with several parallel, and often competing, regional organisations established. A Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was founded in 1981 bringing together Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman; an Arab Maghreb Union (UMA, from its French acronym) was launched in 1987 grouping Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia and Libya; and a short-lived Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) was set up in 1989 composed of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and then-North Yemen. The pan-Arab feeling has never, however, consolidated fully around any of these state-led initiatives and a measure of ambiguity was carried over into the implementation of the unification plan. The transregional links of pan-Arabism proved more complex and pan-Arabism itself became a political tool, with, for instance, the conservative monarchical Arab Union of Jordan and Iraq in 1958 an obvious reaction to the progressivist republican UAR of Syria and Egypt declared a few months earlier; or the ACC a response to the GCC.

The advance of the colonial project and its Eurocentric narrative had triggered a reaction, with the colonised increasingly developing counter-narratives in pursuit of identity by way of cooperation. In effect, the Berlin conference-type cooperation among countries of the European empires planted the seeds for a counter-cooperation by modern socialism-flavoured subaltern nationalisms that navigated both the roads of their own definition and those of cooperation. As this led, from about the 1880s to the 1910s, to what Cemil Aydin terms 'the popularisation of geopolitics' (Aydin 2013, p. 676), the production of 'new' nationalisms could, in effect, from the beginning, conceive of 'solidarity' as a natural component of Southern identity. As pan-Arabism forged ahead, however, it started encountering the resistance of local nationalisms whereby domestic notions of a given Arab nation stood increasingly in the way of the larger nationalistic project. The distinguishing nature of the former project became more and more elusive as 'Algerianess', 'Moroccaness', 'Egyptianess', 'Syrianess', 'Iraqiness' and so on started overtaking the minds and hearts of these countries' citizens. Indeed, how could pan-Arabists push so strongly for Palestinian statehood while calling domestically for a blurring of boundaries among Arab nations? The dissonance was more than conceptual, soon enough encapsulated in the realpolitik game of geopolitical competition between the new Arab nations. Pan-Arabism became anew, or rather remained, an ideal. That to which an Algerian had to exclusively express attachment became a competitive process in which the local inevitably won. Pan-Arabism was also predicated on a symbiotic relationship between state and society. When the regimes showed their colours to be of the repressive kind, the nationalist narrative became associated with dispossession instead of – a decade earlier – empowerment.

Finally, in the most evident limitation of its manifestation as a South–South project able to transcend the Arab region, pan-Arabism was never able to make significant political connections

beyond the Middle East and North Africa. In spite of the celebrated April 1955 Asian African Bandung moment and connections between Nasser and Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, sub-Saharan African, Asian and indeed Latin American issues carried little importance for the nationalists denouncing the West from Baghdad and Damascus. When, for instance, Malcolm X – as, during the last year of his life, he was transforming into a global political leader linking the domestic racial discrimination in the United States with the larger issues of the decolonising world (Ambar 2014) – attempted to reach out to Arab leaders during his visits to the region, notably Nasser and Saudi Arabian Prince Faysal, he was met with socially welcoming but politically tepid responses. The guarded nature of such engagements was evidence of a self-centredness that had long marked and remains a feature of Arab politics.

### Aftermath

Pan-Arabism was arguably a moment (1870s to 1970s) which was essentially 'one sort of modern anti-colonial nationalism' (Breuilly 1994, p. 149). Even some 50 years since it de facto came to a slow halt, its appeal for Arabs remains strong but it unequivocally lacked that which allows nations to build themselves over time, namely a tangible centre of gravity. Eminently paradoxical and possibly *sui generis*, Arab nationalism was cogent enough to be recognised and carried appeal for many an Arab but it was equally hollow at its centre, once filled only by the statist machinery of the authoritarian postcolonial Middle Eastern and North African régimes. As nationalism is, however, about duration, pan-Arabism then persisted more as a sentiment than an actual project, and even less a politically viable one. Ever disposed to express scepticism or register Arab shortcoming, Orientalist mainstream media and experts often noted in subsequent decades the 'end' or 'failure' of Arab nationalism – an example among many is Fouad Ajami's 1978 text, 'The End of Pan-Arabism' – failing to elevate the analysis and see that, in effect, pan-Arabism had merely been an experiment (arguably a successful one in terms of its local anti-colonial dimension), which had been superseded by other local and regional dynamics. Pan-Arabism came on the heels of European nationalism, rode the anti-colonial movement, allowed minorities to strike a balance with majorities, benefited from modernity, enjoyed a fantastic poster child in Nasser (Aburish 2004) and used the Islamist threat and the Israeli *bête noire* to justify its dominion before reaching the natural limits of the anti-colonial conjunctual movement that it inherently was.

Above and beyond the complexity of nationalism itself (Özkirimli 1999) any form of pan-nationalism also requires a driving logic. The longer-term difficulty for pan-Arabism to survive as a lasting ideology in that sense was then not so much its power as a narrative – it had plenty of that, as noted with its *contra mundum* logic (against the Ottomans, the French/British/Americans and Israelis) and the Palestine issue – but rather the gnawing fact it had no deep history. This did not have to be an impediment per se since as a modernising ideology it could claim to be propelled forward. In the history-dominated Arab world, however, such a gap proved to be an Achilles' heel. The deeper pan-Arabism went, the more it encountered Islam. Trans-Islamism, contrary to trans-Arabism, was indeed a reality that both existed historically with the Arabo-Islamic Empire and the Ottoman Empire, almost uninterrupted until the early 20th century, and was in effect being reborn at the level of irredentist and insurgent transnational Islamist groups across the area from the 1970s onwards.

Arguably then, the story of pan-Arabism is the story of the emergence and consolidation of sovereign states in the Arab world (Mufti 1996, p. 2). Indeed, the pan-Arabist approach was always in competition with the demands of statehood. The more the states pushed toward supranational Arabhood, the more their systems were tested and their societies – although sympathetic to Arab unity projects – started asking more forceful questions of their governments. In effect,

the conflicting demands of the various nationalist ideologies have prevented the development of a uniform political identity in these heterogeneous societies (Kelidar 1993, p. 315). What sense to give to Arab solidarity remained vague in the face of statehood, and the Ba'ath slogan, for instance, '*wihda, hurriya, ishtirakiya*' (unity, freedom and socialism) was not particularly compelling as it looked like a mixture of different orientations. Logically *qutriya* (regionalism) became the problem for those seeking pan-unity, even though the ambiguity lent itself to modulation as Fred Halliday noted:

Nor indeed is such plurality of identities necessarily a negative tension – it may, instead, provide a wider reserve of symbols and legitimation for political leaders and states to draw on. Thus, Arab leaders and nationalist movements have quite easily espoused both forms of nationalism and varied the relationship between them at different times. When co-operation with other Arab states is the priority, or when a state wishes to legitimate its intervention in the affairs of another state, the pan-Arab or *qaumi* predominates. When a state wishes to downplay the shared interests of the Arab world, or justify confrontation with another state, the local or *qutri* comes to the fore.

(Halliday 2005, p. 210)

Bookended by the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 and the June 1967 War, by way of the Palestine question and the Algerian one in that interim, pan-Arabism was always moving forward as a reaction to external agency. Whether it took the form of Ottoman domination that needed to be brought to an end (and doing so, too, in alliance with the British as the Hashemite-Lawrence association illustrated vividly and problematically), colonial control by France or the United Kingdom, or Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, what often gave a temporary centre of gravity came from an outsider's initiative. When looking inwardly, the movement had strength of memory and powerful objective cultural and linguistic ties among the Arab nations but it lacked an autonomous and self-sustaining overarching project which would transcend the specific nationalisms that began to gain shape, momentum and structure from the 1940s onwards. Ultimately, was pan-Arabism anything else beyond the rejection of external domination? The answer lies in its inability to resist the challenge of religion. When Arabs in most of these key states (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Algeria) started making the ethos-credo choice between that which they are and that in which they believe, in favour of the latter, pan-Arabism looked nice and desirable but passé, if not obsolete. State-driven and dressed in the clothes of the one-party state it could not serve as a platform to contest authoritarianism. Vague and emotional as an all-embracing concept, it could equally not be useful to join the physical battle against the new occupiers (the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s and, later, the Americans in Iraq in the 2000s). In a coda to the story, many former Arab nationalist leaders, Saddam Hussayn notably (Baram 2014), subsequently developed a penchant for religiosity and the uprisings of 2011 were driven by anti-regime social movements, both in effect closing the book on pan-Arabism.

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