

Arab Identity, Nationalism and Fragmentation:

Uprisings in the Contemporary Middle East

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How are we to understand the overlapping identities and loyalties made so apparent in the Arab uprisings that have taken place under vastly different circumstances across the contemporary Middle East? Even the most serious observer may experience difficulty in attempting to isolate a comprehensive definition of which countries, regions, and populations justifiably constitute the modern Middle East.

Nevertheless, a historical analysis of the nationalisms found in those Arab states broadly included in popular understandings of the Middle East would seemingly be a logical point of entry. However, a survey of contemporary discourse on the state of nationalism in the Arab world reveals that the majority of scholars, usually acting as outside observers, have concerned themselves with either arguing for--or against--the notion that the Arab world does, or has, constituted a unified homogeneity which lends itself to manifestations of Pan-Arabism in one way or another, be they political, economic, or cultural. Recent and violent adumbrations of longstanding, sometimes pre-Islamic, ethnic and religious differences coupled with the seemingly incontestable theories of globalization and the disintegration of the nation state as a political entity have required scholars to seriously reconsider identity and nationalism in the region.

On the surface, the social cleavages so prominent in the contemporary Middle East may appear to have only emerged following the recent uprisings which have taken place in several Arab countries since 2011.¹ However in reality, the nature of many

of these divisions are pre-Islamic, ethnic, linguistic, even ancient. As such, it is exceedingly difficult to speculate, much less pinpoint exactly when certain forces ignited this current period of apparent discord. We can, however, identify intermittent flashes of divisive conflict being stoked in the region since at least the beginning of the divide-and-conquer methods pioneered by European colonial powers in the wake of the Ottoman Empire. Ethnic and religious minorities further clashed under the neo-colonial methods employed by Arab leaders who, in many instances, replaced and replicated the divisive practices of the proceeding European colonial administrations.²

The swift action of autocratic Arab leaders who violently, but largely successfully, managed the seemingly impending clash of minorities in the Levant helped to give purpose to the nation state in this context; namely the protection of minorities. What receives far less attention is the authentic nationalisms, which developed in the process of holding together vastly diverse and divergent nation states. This principle will be further demonstrated through an examination of the Iran-Iraq War. Short-lived and often failed attempts at Pan-Arabism further reveal the surprising strength and resilience of the individual Arab nationalisms, which we will discuss. Indeed, though almost entirely artificial in their colonial inceptions, Arab states have been largely successful in fostering genuine national identities in post-colonial period.

Substantiating such a broad overview of Arab national development will help to frame the contemporary division and social movements at play in the Arab world. Too often, recent discourse regards the violent interaction of various identities in contemporary Arab countries as nothing more than a common case of fragmentation, or as it has been referred to more recently, ‘Arab Balkanization.’ However, by painting a narrative in equally broad strokes of fragmentation and globalization theory, such discourses have misplaced the nuance they sought to add. The almost schizophrenic fluidity and rapidly evolving internal politics, which

characterizes the political life of Arab, states like Syria, Iraq and Egypt, implores observers not to be sated by essentialist perspectives that seek to neatly, and briefly, explain the complexities of the political transition underway. At the same time, we cannot conceptualize the national identities of Arab states without examining the emerging, or perhaps always present but now empowered, local identities which are defined by ethnic, religious, and ideological lines rather than by the arbitrarily drawn borders.³

Such speculation, espoused most heavily in journalistic sources, eagerly envisions a uniform future *for* the region which entails the tumultuous fracturing of Arab states, most of whom have been hostile to American interests and interventionism, into small, and unthreatening, ‘statelets’ organized according to ethnic and religious cleavages.⁴ But, such essentialist, and suspect, assays of Arab fragmentation are of considerable consequence if only because of their remarkable capacity to dictate and steer political discourse and policymakers alike surrounding the region’s future.

Dabashi elaborates on the dangerous nature of such conjectural forecasts, arguing that “the shrinking size of the world has made remote political events into household concerns here in the West. In the age of radical contemporaneity and mass media, quick explanations, understandings and solutions are packaged and advertised.”⁵ Instead of forecasting the disintegration of Arab nation states, or racing to neatly organized but only partial explanations, this paper will explore the hybrid identities and loyalties which have developed from the, often benign, interplay between regional, national, and global bodies. This discussion of misplaced identity in the Arab world will compel an examination of rising subnational entities, and their commensurate cosmopolitan structures.

The abundance of new technologies and institutions, which have enabled greater independence and integration of subnational regions in the global economy, will also be of great significance. The accommodation, and in some cases, infusion of political Islam and other organic structures in the emerging democratic nationalisms will be also considered critically. The concluding portion of this paper will delineate the necessary conditions for the resurgence of the nation state in the Arab world, and explore what implications this response may hold for a supposedly post-colonial era. Lastly, the presence and development of hybrid identities in the process of global integration will be questioned in its relation to resurgent Arab nationalism to demonstrate the resilience and flexibility present in many Arab states.⁶

The merciless and daunting violence of the Syrian Civil War has provided the outside observer with many reasons to fear that relations between minority groups in that country have been shattered beyond reconciliation. Indeed, it is widely understood that the religious, ethnic, and political divisions, which have simmered just below surface of the Arab World for decades have existed for centuries, are now beginning to boil over. On the surface, it seems difficult to imagine any reconciliation, much less a shared national identity prospering between Alawites and the Sunni's who have slaughtered each other in such shocking circumstances. Nevertheless, there is much to be gained from recognizing the inherent ancient and heterogenous nature of the Middle East as George Antonious did as early as 1938 in his groundbreaking and formative work, *The Arab Awakening*.⁸

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that countless narratives, most of which are journalistic in nature, have emerged to forecast and even predict an inevitable break-up of Arab states into smaller states that are to be defined along ethnic, religious or ideological lines. When compared to the colonial borders which define much of the Middle East, this view may appear to be

sufficiently nuanced, or at least, a less arbitrary conceptualization of Arab identities. And yet, most versions of this narrative call for a radical redrawing of not just Syria, but of the entire Middle East.⁹ These sweeping forecasts of a shattered Arab world are perhaps best epitomized by Robin Wright who recently imagined how five Arab countries could break apart into no less than fourteen ‘statelets.’ It is difficult to not consider skeptically such an audacious view *for* the Middle East, which includes the deconstruction of many states, including Syria and Iraq, which have historically stood as strategic rivals and opponents to U.S. interests in the region. Similarly, it is no secret that smaller, less self-sufficient Arab states would represent a much weaker and easily divided opposition to U.S. intervention in the region. As such, this paper seeks to understand whether these bold predictions are rooted in evidence-based analysis or if they represent little more than opportunistic conjecture. Central to all versions of the Arab fragmentation theory is the disintegration of the nation state, as its ability to suppress rising regional, social, and religious minorities appears to be declining. But the failure of nation state in assuaging and controlling these social cleavages is a global one, which has been brought to prominence by the political fluidity of the uprisings in various Arab countries. Moreover, many of the divisions of the Arab world are ancient and have surfaced in one form or another, several times in recent memory. We need to look seriously at the colonial foundation that the modern Middle East was constructed upon if we are to understand the present.

An eternal melting pot, the Middle East encompasses countless peoples, faiths, and histories. One of the longest-running and most recent empires in the region, the Ottoman Empire, collapsed in the early twentieth century after many years of hemorrhaging territory and influence. Curiously, much of the failed Turkish Empire was carved up and traded by the imperial European powers, rather than by the Arabic-speaking populations living in those areas.¹⁰ Early in the twentieth century, the

enormously influential Sykes-Picot agreement was used by the European powers to carve out new spheres of influence from the former territory of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹

In their colonial ambitions, these new European rulers sought to impose all the characteristics of a modern, Westphalian state in their new domains. But in doing so, the Europeans tried unsuccessfully to apply modern solutions to centuries old divisions of religion and ethnicity. A preeminent example of this failure can be seen is the French Mandate of Syria, an experiment that resulted in the creation of six smaller statelets that included enclaves for Maronite Christians, Druze, Alawites, and Sunni Muslims. Then, in 1920 the State of Greater Lebanon was officially created, but from the start the country faced significant obstacles to national unity.¹² Maronite Christians lived near the coast or towards the center of the state, while the South was dominated by a sizable population of Shia Muslims.

Additionally, the North was home to significant pockets of Alawite and Sunni Muslims, with the Druze largely scattered throughout. Tragically, these fragile demographic divisions would later play an oversized part in the fifteen-year long, Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) which claimed more than 120 000 lives, and displaced many more.¹³ Even today, religious tensions in Lebanon have wreaked havoc, as a series of recent and deadly car bombings that have once again thrown open old tensions has undoubtedly shown.

The fault lines that run through much of the Arab world create unique circumstances in each country and are variously divided among categories of ethnicity, race, religion and ideology. Moreover, these deep divisions did not only emerge in response to the political tumult experienced during many of the Arab uprisings, instead they had always been present and often active. Despite the enormous challenges - and bloodshed - autocratic leaders like

Hafez al-Assad and Saddam Hussein had been largely successful in suppressing internal divisions within their respective countries.¹⁴ Arab leaders also undertook bold attempts to reinvigorate (often imagined) prestigious national heritages, as in Iraq and Egypt. Moreover, one could argue that Arab Dictators benefited immensely from the outlet that the newly created State of Israel provided them, as they were able to channel and redirect social discontent into a foreign power. Saddam Hussein's planned attacks on Israel during his own imperial invasion of Iraq not only shifted the narrative of the baldy unacceptable war but also allowed him to seize on the populism of his actions and develop a national identity, which projected itself as a bulwark against Zionism.

As we consider the future of Arab national identities we would be remiss to disregard the meaningful and authentic nationalisms that have emerged since the colonial era, even in the most artificially created Arab states. Too often, narratives of Arab fragmentation do not give credence to these national identities, assuming that they are too arbitrarily created to warrant any serious consideration. Furthermore, the sweeping theories which seek to remap the Middle East make few distinctions between Sunni and Shia states, the theoretical Arab democracies of Egypt and Iraq, and the monarchical states of Persian Gulf, the latter of which have been significantly more effective in weathering their own revolutionary storms.¹⁵ Bahrain, with its significant Shia population, is a notable but unique exception. Moreover, the development of a nationalism under the direction of a charismatic Arab leader, even if authoritarian, has been viewed as a positive and emancipatory response to European colonialism and domination. Gokcel explains, "Arab nationalism was reactivated in response to the domination policies pursued by the Europeans in the Arab world."

Critics of strong Arab national identities have repeatedly misconstrued the sentiment of Pan-Arabism as evidence of a

challenge to individual nationalisms. In fact, the short-lived legacy of attempts to establish Pan-Arab nationalism (*umma arabiyya*) demonstrates the resilient nature and power of individual Arab nationalisms in the face of attempts at union. Though significant, the failure of Pan-Arabism cannot be attributed merely to the shifting of political alliances, or even military failures. More accurately, as seen in the case of the United Arab Republic (UAR), the domineering prominence of one Arab state over others, namely Egypt under the Gamal Abdel Nasser, served as a much greater obstacle to Pan-Arab unity. Gokcel explains:

The conflicts that took place in the Arab area after the end of the Second World War demonstrated very clearly that the Arab world was a state structure in which the unity objective promoted by the pan-Arab ideology was very difficult to achieve. Therefore, there were a series of conflicts between various Arab states, which did not add value to the idea of Arab unity, such as the conflict between monarchists and republicans in Yemen, the one between Iraq and Kuwait, after the latter proclaimed its independence, in 1961, the conflict between Morocco and Tunisia around the issue of Mauritania, the civil war in Algeria, the Algerian-Moroccan conflict etc. In addition, the Arab world proved to be quite broken into pieces following the First Gulf War (1991), once with the US military intervention in Iraq (2003) and, recently, following the conflict in Libya.¹⁶

Among other failed attempts at an Arab union is the conspicuous example of the monarchist rival Arab Federation (AF). The speedy collapse of the Arab Federation was only further testament to the strength of individual nationalist identities in the Arab world and the complexities of attempting to merge two radically differing systems of governance. Moreover, one may

argue that the temporal presence of a charismatic leader such as Nasser is utterly necessary in forging any structured attempt at Arab political unity. The great plurality of ethnic, religious and ideological identities which had to be included in Pan-Arabism presented significant challenges to those narratives which imagined all Arab's as a united nation with a shared language, religious and heritage.¹⁷

However, it was competing imperial and national interests within the Pan-Arab movements that ultimately, and understandably, rendered them unfeasible.¹⁸ On this point, we should be careful not to orientalize by unduly painting Arabs' national identities as being generally predisposed to imperialism. This position, usually adopted by less than serious observers of the region, seeks to grossly attribute all of the region's social and political shortcomings to the existence of an essential Arab character; the same *Arabism* which Antonious showed to be a fantasy.¹⁹ Moreover, broad portrayals of Arab nations as destructive powers constantly vying for imperial dominance are not only unwarranted, but reincarnated forms of orientalist discourse which is content to describe autocratic despotism as an *eastern* phenomena fundamentally contrasted and opposed to the supposed liberal, democratic ideals of the West.

While it is possible to imagine the triumph of Arab nationalisms over the corresponding narratives of neighbouring Arab states, is it also imaginable that such recent and arbitrarily created Arab nationalisms could compete with faith-based identity? In light of reboiled tensions between Sunni Arabs and the minority Alawite Shia Muslims fighting in Syria, this question takes on renewed significance. To understand the hybrid identities and social dynamics at play in such seemingly binary scenarios we must examine past conceptualizations of what it means to be Arab, or Muslim, or Sunni, Shiite and so on. The still raw memory of the 1980-1989 Iran Iraq War provides us with a contemporary

example in which to consider these relationships. During the devastating, opportunistic war waged by Saddam Hussein following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, we are able to glimpse the hybridity of identities in the Arab world.²⁰ The surprising resilience of Arab Nationalism was demonstrated by the Shia regiments who served on the front lines of a Sunni-controlled army and fought against the recently created Shia theocracy of Iran.²¹ It is equally notable that this impressive commitment to nationalism was present in the aggressor and continued throughout the bloody and destructive conflict. It is clear that though bruised and torn, the *Leviathan* is very much alive in the Arab world of today.²² Though convenient in their simplicity, we must question the integrity of narratives, which misappropriate the current political flux experienced in many Arab countries with a wider process of globalization which is, as expected, taking place on a global scale.

Moreover, globalization is still widely believed to be driven by economic forces. Friedrichs states that there is “a broad consensus that the economy is the engine of globalization” and that “concomitantly, it is fair to say that globalization discourse is inherently economic.”²³ The forces of economic globalization are certainly profound but they are gradual, and simply cannot not account for the rapid and fluid divisions of identity in the contemporary Arab world. In fact, the political isolation and largely insular economies (excluding the export of oil and its derivatives) which characterize many Arab states, may actually serve to mitigate the encroachment of globalization and its’ attack on the nation state’s purpose and sovereignty.

The tumultuous and uncertain political, and economic environment, which has seemingly challenged the legitimacy of many Arab states, may in fact afford these states with unique, and probably temporary, opportunities to reassert themselves, strengthening their existential purpose and relevancy among the majority. Pillar elaborates on the seemingly paradoxical resilience

of nationalism in the African context, “Africa continues to be a monument to the strength of the nation-state as a point of reference and object of competition, no matter how arbitrarily drawn its boundaries or deficient its central governments’ control over their territories”.²⁴

Much of Africa is defined by colonial borders which are equally arbitrary to those found in the Middle East, and this example lends important insights to understanding the nationalism found in contemporary Arab world. It is clear that attributing too much significance to the obstacles posed by European colonialism, or even the notorious Sykes-Picot plan, is to belie the authentic and deeply profound nationalisms that have emerged out of these less than perfect national inception.

Beyond the inability of arbitrary borders to prevent the development of strong nationalism, we see that the recent armed struggles, foreign interventions and social divisions, which have riddled many Arab countries since the end of World War II, have provided myriad opportunities for the effective development of these Arab nationalisms. In a purveyance of the modern state system Herz rightly asserts that, “people, in the long run, will recognize that authority, any authority, which possesses the power of protection.”²⁵ If this principle is applied to the tumultuous environment present in many Middle Eastern states including Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq one can envision how the nation-state may actually reassert itself and thrive in its ability to swiftly and efficiently manage interfaith conflicts, non-state actors, and lawless regions (Sinai for example) which threaten the economic and political stability of its’ citizens. Max Weber famously articulated a similar position, namely the state’s monopoly on violence being legitimate. Jachtenfuchs elaborates on this monopoly and helps us to frame the significance of civil conflicts in Arab countries. He states: “It took centuries for the state successfully to centralize control over the means of coercion

against all major rival groups. This monopolization has now become a generalized expectation. A state that is unable to uphold this monopoly is considered a ‘failed state.’”²⁶

Indeed, Arab states are currently locked in an existential war for their continued relevance, but fundamentally, Arab states still have much to offer their citizens. The swift and effective dispersal of force provides near endless opportunities to show its competency and purpose to a majority demographic. Jachtenfuchs continues: “With respect to the legitimacy of the use of physical force, this means that only the state has a generally accepted right to use force against its citizens or against other states. Other groups or individuals may use force in exceptional cases, but their use of force is not generally considered legitimate.”²⁷

This theory of legitimate uses of force is manifest in contemporary Egypt, where a pragmatic and perceptive General Abdel al-Sisi has recognized the tarnished but still immensely valuable brand of legitimate state-sanctioned violence. The masses, even a majority of Egyptians, appear to have agreed with al-Sisi’s analysis of the deteriorating economic and political situation which had arisen under the ineffective and increasingly authoritarian Muslim Brotherhood regime, and culminated in the July 3, 2013 ouster of President Morsi. Since seizing power under controversial circumstances, General al-Sisi has only had to replicate his initial response. In bold displays of *realpolitik*, Gen. al-Sisi has continually crushed political dissenters and any minority interest or ethnic group that has openly challenged the military-led government’s monopoly on violence.²⁸

But if Arab states are able to reassert themselves and their national narratives through entrenched means, what implications does this hold for the development of new political systems in the Arab world? The domineering, monopolizing actions of General al-Sisi’s new central government or the brutally violent attacks and

indiscriminate shelling of the Syrian regime upon its own citizens can be certainly be viewed as an interventionist approach into specific, peripheral spheres of Arab society, be they ethnic, religious or ideologically united communities.²⁹

In this light, it is not difficult to assume that such reassertions of the Arab state are little more than postmodern reincarnations of colonial, imperialist policies. And while there is undoubtedly truth within this claim, it is hard to view the reassertion of Arab states as universally neo-colonial, or imperialist, if only because of the organic manner in which they are reemerging and redefining themselves. Arab states may succeed in redefining and re-engaging disparate minorities and peripheral ideologies as they seek to recreate, or at least rebrand themselves following the uprisings which began in 2011.

In describing the newly interpreted and once-again relevant position of nationalism in the new global order, Pillar describes how: “The Westphalian state has been sold successfully worldwide, despite its made-in-Europe label.”³⁰ The successful export and contemporary production of nationalisms in the Arab world is no knock-off either. Arab national identities have built upon the principles and framework laid down in Westphalia but they have also added local, and religious understandings to their political systems. Banality aside, the nation state may have a monopoly on violence but no country or cultural tradition can justifiably claim a monopoly definition on the development of national identity. These modifications to the Westphalian model do not represent mere accommodations for religion and local conceptions of democratic rule but rather integral and still developing parts of a new political system.³¹

Arab *Leviathans*, heaving and convulsing under the weight of their respective ethnic, religious and social cleavages may emerge stronger, more agile and most importantly, more authentic

and representative. The rising influence and inclusion of Political Islam in the Arab governments serves as an important harbinger of structural and constitutional changes that seek to identify and build on the shared values of democracy and Islam. This more nuanced view of development is far from simple and its results may surprise and confuse Western audience who expect to see a near identical reflection of Western liberal ideals.³² The inclusion of Political Islam in Arab democracies may differ quite radically from Western perceptions and norms of democracy, substituting Islamic principles like Justice where we might place Liberty. Language aside, the validity of these new democracies and their forms should be judged on their actions and their treatment of minority groups and ideologies which gave rise to them.

In some instances however, Arab states may be undergoing radical reshaping as regional, or subnational entities emerge and engage with both national and international structures. But, the development and ascendancy of these regional players need not represent the stark fragmentation imagined by those who forecast the break-up and dissolution of most Arab states. Instead the rise of provinces, states, and even municipalities is being facilitated by a myriad of new technologies in communication, banking and transport which allow these internal bodies to effortlessly transcend hard shell of the nation state to interact, integrate and trade with the global economy in new ways.³³

Framing the long-term retreat of the state in the Arab world should not be viewed as a mutually exclusive dichotomy between discourses of globalization and fragmentation. Moreover, the economical and political ascent of regional bodies can never fully account for the hybrid, and often competing identities and loyalties present in overlapping systems of Arab authority. Harvey explains the rise of subnational regions in this context and demonstrates how the “complicated relationship across scales in which local initiatives can percolate upwards to a global scale and vice versa at

the same time as processes within a particular definition of scale—interurban and interregional competition being the most obvious examples—can rework the local/regional configurations of what globalization is about.”³⁴

This complicated relationship of cooperation between local and global bodies does preclude the role of the state, though it may decenter its authority and functions to peripheral regions and groups in some instances. Therefore, rather than disintegrating, the nation state is being pulled, gradually, between two cooperating forces of globalization and fragmentation. However, fragmentation in this context does not refer to the unlikely possibility of new, independent small scale Arab states divided according to irreconcilable religious and ethnic divisions. An abundance of new technologies, and even a limited “cosmopolitan” identity, is making it easier for regions and subnational jurisdictions to access the global sphere in a meaningful way, but this development must work in tandem with the nation state’s sovereignty.

This principle is baldly evident in the hybridity of Iraq’s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Discourses of Syrian Kurdish fragmentation should consider seriously the milder, hybrid approach, which has emerged across the border in northern Iraq. The subnational body operates within the state system and reaps the benefits of this hybrid model of autonomy and identity. Iraqi Kurds have gained limited self-rule, and a local, more representative form of government that is sensitive to Kurdish identity and ethnic concerns without sacrificing the security, structures, and nationalist identity of the nation state.

Friedrichs offers a partial explanation as to why subnational bodies may actually prefer limited self-rule over unbridled independence; “there is no viable alternative to the problem-solving capacity of the nation-state in crucial realms of social life, namely the provision of political peace and social order within its borders and the organization of collective action with and beyond

the national territory.”³⁵ In the narrower context of the contemporary Middle East, the necessity of the functions and protections of the state are observable in clashes between ethnic and religious communities.

The binding heritage, language, or cultural traits which loosely define any future subnational regions are likely to be equally influenced by the economic and social interplay between their global subnational counterparts which allows us to imagine a third, hybrid but cosmopolitan identity forming.³⁶ While ethnic or religious subregions within Arab states would be closely tied to their individual nationalisms, they would undoubtedly be influenced profoundly by shared, yet individually shaped conceptualizations of an emerging cosmopolitanism. The multiplicity of identities that may be represented under a cosmopolitan system is described by Kurasawa, “cosmopolitanism does not signify being from nowhere or everywhere at once, but rather embracing the simultaneous existence of multilayered local, national and global identities.”³⁷

The Basque People, living in modern-day France and Spain provide a unique example of how “biethnic identity” can circuitously transcend the fixed borders and find an appropriate status within the structure of a supranational body such as the European Union.³⁸ Cosmopolitanism does not demand a homogenous identity spread equally across all regions, instead a reasonably heterogeneous hybridity of perspectives that fundamentally values human rights and the rule of law will add complexity and vitality to the system.³⁹ As such, hybrid identity should be viewed as a necessary but encouraging aspect of rising subnational bodies, not conflicting with narratives of Arab nationalism but complementing and enriching the modern state’s integration with the global sphere.

The future of Arab nation states is still very much one of flux and of profound change. However, post structural discourses that strive to carefully examine of the multiple identities, technologies, and religious traditions at stake in the unfolding changes in the Arab world will provide us with a more nuanced, informed and comprehensive analysis. This paper has sought to reveal how premature, uninformed, or simply subjective forecasts from outside observers are of little value in the long term.⁴⁰ Moreover, political bias and motivation in these conjectural assays of fragmentation in Arab states should not be dismissed as insignificant. Such accounts rely on essentializing understanding of the Arab world and its supposedly homogenous character to align with interventionist optimism.

While it is baldly apparent that the Arab states are under existential siege from the forces of both globalization and greater regionalism, it is unrealistic to speculate or even predict the absolute disintegration of significant and authentic forms of Arab nationalism. This paper's chronicling of the development of individual Arab nationalisms, though sometimes contrived in their embryonic stages, has ultimately proven them to be potent and resilient forms of identity. Moreover, the contemporary Arab world is providing unique and likely short-term opportunities for the Arab states of Syria, Egypt, and Jordan to reassert their sovereignty. However, this reassertion of individual nationalisms is compatible with developing forms of hybrid identity and the rising economic and political significance of subnational regions. This discourse holds great importance for understandings of leaner and more organic, authentic Arab nationalisms, and more broadly for the emerging relationship between Arab states and developing global and regional sphere.

Notes

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- ³ Ibid.
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- ⁸ Fred Halliday, "Review: Arab Nation, Arab Nationalism", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2002).
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- ¹⁰ Scheinmann, "The Map that Ruined the Middle East", 2013.
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- ¹² Karen Rasler, "Internationalized Civil War: A Dynamic Analysis Of The Syrian Intervention In Lebanon." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27, no. 3 (1983).
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Sukumar Muralidharan, "Saddam Hussein, Western Imperialism and Arab Identity," *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no. 38 (1990).
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- ¹⁹ Halliday, "Review: Arab Nation, Arab Nationalism," 2002.
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- ²³ Jorg Friedrichs, "The Meaning of New Medievalism," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 4 (2001).

- ²⁴ Pillar, "The Age of Nationalism," 2013.
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