

Example of arab nationalism an influenced ideology seeking identity essay

[Countries](#), [England](#)



Nationalism is an ideology that celebrates the heritage and cultures of different places combined with a sense of a strong sense of patriotism. Similarly, Arab nationalism is an ideology that celebrates Arab Culture and heritage. It is the feeling among the Arab people due to sharing a common same culture, language and religion and it calls for the unification of the Arab region into a single political entity. This Arab region is said to span from the Atlantic Ocean in North Africa to the Arabian Sea to the East. Arab nationalism has seen its rise into strong political entity with influence from many parts of the world. However, the most prominent influence Arab nationalism is mainly the West. Western nations have largely influenced the manner in which Arabs view themselves and has played key role in shaping what is today the ' Arab Nation'. This research examines the extent to which the West has influenced Arab nationalism in terms steps taken by these nations to hinder or foster Arab nationalism. The research will also attempt to find out if any influence from the West determined the model of the Arab ideology. Finally, the research would seek to determine if Arab ideology was natural or invented.

Origins and Rise of Arab nationalism

According to Maalouf, the rise of Arab nationalism was first fostered by the weakening and the eventual collapse of the Ottoman Empire in early 20th century (12). At the turn of the twentieth century, several scholars in Egypt had started spreading anti-Ottomanism. Arabs in Syria and Lebanon had also developed secret Arab societies that were concerned with retuning vitally to the Arab Land and remove the hold of the Turks.

As the First World War was underway, a group of Arabs from Mecca incited

an Arab uprising against the Ottomans. It is important to understand that the said uprising was not led by nations of province instead it was led by an ideology of Arab identity. Soon after the Turks lost the war, the new Arab movements settle in Damascus (Maalouf, 20). However, the intricacies of forming a new independent political unit under the Arab banner would soon drive the nationalist movement into disarray. While the old guard that led the movement pushed for a unifying political front, a younger group of the population was unsure about the said formation of the independent nation. This was due to the fact that Britain had provided most of the influence in the uprising and the younger guard felt that they had been left out. Britain and France would soon control lands won by the Arab uprising. This new development would soon define an Arab movement that was solely concerned with the extermination of the imperial control over Arab lands. Fisher argues that Arab nationalism has since been based on the ideology of opposing European (Western) control over the Arab nations.

Arab Nationalism Based on Anti-Western ideals

The model under which Arab nationalism seems to thrive is based on ideals that seek to fight Western ideology and culture. To begin with, the expansion of Arab nationalist movement in 1920s was based on revolts against imperialist controls and colonization by the West (Khalifah, 21). One such revolt was the Iraqi Revolt of 1920 in which Arabs rose against the British rule reducing its mandate to merely advisory responsibilities. Similarly, Syrians started an uprising against the French in 1925 leading to the eventual independence of Syria. In 1919, Egypt took the same course in

resenting the British rule granting Egypt official independence in 1922 (Khalīfah, 25). However, after all these great strides towards reducing Western influence from the region, Western nations still had massive influence on the leadership of these nations such as British control over the Suez Canal.

Arab nationalism took a new definition immediately after the Second World War in opposing Western influence in the region. Immediately after the fall of Hitler Germany, there was need to relocate the Jews to a region that they would find identity and security. For this reason Israel was formed at the middle of the ' Arab country' against the will of the Arab League.

Additionally, the formation of Israel, a state of non-Islamic Jewish majority presented a challenge to Arab identity that was predominantly Muslim. Arab nationalists such as Nasser, the Egyptian President at the time decided to wage war against Israel but suffered humiliating defeat. Other war followed and in the process the unity of the Arabs was constantly under test and every time they lost a war, the repercussions were deep and adverse.

Soon the concerns of Arab unity shifted depending on the state. While Egypt and Syria sought to have a neutral approach towards the UK and US, other nations started building relation based on common interest.

Arab Nationalism fostered by the West

According to Maalouf, the idea Arab Nationalism first came into the light after advice from the British to revolt against the Turk in the 1920s (32).

Western nations planted the idea of Arabs uniting against a common enemy through nationalistic views. So a modern Arab identity sprouted. Ironically, it

is against the influence of these Western nations such as Britain and USA that Arab nationality thrives. The existence of Western nations appearing united seems to inspire a similar version of Arab unity.

However, this model of Arab nationalist definition has come under threat in the recent Arab uprising witnessed over the past year. The first spark of the Arab uprising was in Tunisia where the population successfully ousted pro-West president Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali on January 2011. This wave of Arab uprising soon spread into Egypt with a similar result of a long serving pro-West president ousted. Libya, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon experienced similar popular calls for reversion in Arab-Western relation. These new crop of Arabs were unhappy with the manner in which Western nations dominated their countries in political and military extents.

The Invention of Arab Nationality

Arab nationality may be viewed as a natural occurrence since it is an ideology shared a people of the same culture, language, religion and heritage. In fact Khalifah argues that Arab ideology was formed under the precepts of Islam and the manner in which Islam defines a people (40). For this reason several scholars would argue that Arab Nationalism is of natural occurrence.

However, Maalouf differs with this argument stating that Arab Nationalism is a totally invented ideology seeking to reduce the influence of the West from the region (28). Most Western nations are economically robust economies that are majorly concerned with gaining necessary resources to secure their economic future. The British and the French instigated the Arab revolt

against the Turks so as to colonize and gain from resource in the Middle East.

The most influential aspect of economic dependence was the discovery vast oil reserves in the Middle East. While the Soviet Union enjoyed 'energy independence' from their own oil reserves, Britain and other Western nations do not have sufficient oil reserves other than to rely on Middle East-supplied oil. This dependence of the Middle East for a vital economic driver presented the Soviets with an opportunity to instigate anti-Western sentiments in the Middle East. Propaganda on Western hegemony has been the inspiration for many Arab nationalist movements since the discovery of oil in 1950s. This anti-West propaganda has since aggravated the Arab-West relation getting to the all-time-low at the turn of the twenty first century. Terrorism has been blamed on Arab Nationalism and the eventual aggressive misjudged policies by the West towards Middle East. It has also led to the one of the longest invasion of Afghanistan and the collapse of the Iraqi state.

Conclusion

Arab Nationalism is a sense and feeling of patriotism towards the Arab identity. It is an ideology that fosters nationhood in the region from Morocco in the Atlantic Ocean all the way to the Arabian Sea in the East. It began as general revolt against the Ottoman rule to oust Turks rule from traditionally Arab land. The model of the Arab Nationalism slightly differed from the Western type as it was based on a people of the same culture, heritage and religion unlike the wets whose unifying factor is mainly economic interests. Arab nationalism is based on ideals that seek to provide people an identity

and a nation free of external influence of the West. However, these idea of riding self from western influence is instigated and an invented ideology.

Works Cited

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