Arabs’ Fractured Oneness and the Split Identity in the Post-Arab Spring Era

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Abstract: “You shall know a word by the company it keeps” John Robert Firth rightly says. A single word in isolation has no sense. Same is the case with individuals, societies, cultures, and nations. In a way or another, the horse is distinguished when connected with other set of animals such as camels, oxen or mules. Similarly, an individual, a culture or a society is defined when it is combined with its opposites, binaries or contradictories. In other words, identity, whether individual, ethnic, racial, national, socio-political or even hybrid is realized only when it’s compared or associated with a set of relations or concepts which, collectively, participate in forming one’s societies identity as whole. As we all know, the construction of one’s identity takes longer time; keeps evolving with the passage of time; and affects and being affected inwardly and outwardly.

This humble research argues the status of the Arab unitary Identity in the age of globalization and how, from the second half of the twentieth century (known as Post-colonial period), the tyrannical men of power and dynastical or monarchical regimes, negatively, contributed to the decay of the Arabs’ oneness; and consequently lead to the pitiable contemporary Arabic situation. This dreadful situation caused a big trauma in the Arab identity and accordingly resulted in a crisis, devastation and loss of identity. Thus, this paper tries to tackle the heart of the matter of identity and classifies the impact of the disintegration of Arabs on the shattered aspirations of the young Arab generations. It also questions the rise and fall of Arab hopes for founding a territorial entity based on a unified identity, focusing on issues that contribute to the prevailing impasse at the beginning of the 21st century.

In summing up, the present paper sheds light on the challenges the Arab-Spring generation encounters, particularly, at the Post-Arab Spring era; and how their struggle for collective Arabic identity is perceived by others.

Keywords: Arabic Civilization, Culture, Identity, Ethnicity, Socio-Politics, Arab-Spring

Introductory Remarks

The discourse on the Arab Identity is a thriller discourse on 22 diverse and independent countries combined with many salient and distinctive characteristics which make them dissimilar from other nations. What marks this dissimilarity and distinctiveness of the Arab world as a unitary Ummah (nation) is the common ties of language, religion, history and significant geographical location on the world map.

Unlike any other nation or race, Arabs, down the ages, have played leading socio-cultural, scientific, ethnic, economic, historical and political roles in different parts of the world; in Asia, Africa and Europe. As they enjoyed respected reputation in the past via their commercial conduct from the Arab peninsula and Yemen, they spread Islam all over the world, particularly, to Indonesia, Malaysia, India and European countries like Spain and Portugal…etc. Many countries, which were in contact with Arabs, across the world, still owe too much to Arabs in different socio-cultural, economic, scientific and civilizational aspects. The footprint of Arab-Muslim Nation’s civilization can’t be denied. The Taj Mahal in India, one of the seven wonders lies in Agra, and the Islamic gardens of Alhambra in Spain are eyewitnesses and immortal symbols of the supremacy, and renaissance of the golden age of the Arab Muslims, East and West. This leading role of the Arabs was a milestone that enabled them enjoying admiring reputation and occupying a high position among other nations. This glory extended till the ruin of Ottoman Empire at the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Consequently, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and emergence of the divided Arab States has its drastic devastation and daring consequences.
not only on the Arab and Islamic nations, but on the entire world as well. It results to the partition of the oneness of Arab-Muslim nation into smaller states; then to the Western Colonization of almost all the Arab countries, except the northern part of Yemen and Hejaz (Saudi Arabia Kingdom nowadays). The glorious past and bright legacy of culture, civilization and history are gradually vanished. Arabs nowadays live their decay and deterioration age, torn between egoism and conformity between sectarianism and ethnicity, between rulers’ tyranny and religious hypocrisy, and between loss of identity and absence of equality. Their forefathers’ glory disappeared, turned to past; and the replaced image is gloomy, dispiriting and even more tragic. However, Reem Bassiouney in her book entitled Arabic Sociolinguistics, supports the view point of Miller that Arabs, nowadays, are perceived differently. She further indicates:

However, I do agree with Miller that an Arab is now defined differently from how it was defined in the early Islamic period. The Arabs' perception of the Arab nation is very complicated and possibly needs a book by itself (cf. Suleiman 2003). Some Arabs perceive themselves as belonging to a nation because they have a common colonial history, they occupy a specific geographical space, they share nostalgia for a glorious past and they speak 'Arabic'. The Arab nation is not a political entity but an ideological one, in the same way as the idea of "one nation, one language" is also sometimes only ideological (226).²

This perception of Arabs in the contemporary age is, obviously, reflects the state of loss, demarcation, isolation, intellectual illiteracy and above all the sense of pessimism and strangeness. All these factors lead to acute loss of Arab oneness, Arab unity and unresolved collective identity.

In her work entitled, In Exile: The Modern Arab Identity, as Witnessed Through Poetry, Will Donovan (2006) has objectively portrayed the state of melancholy Arabs reached and the collapse of their dreams in the postcolonial period till today. She rightly asserts:

_The end of Colonialism in the Arab world brought hope for a clouded future, but at the same time the greatest identity crisis the Arab soul had known since the rise of Islam. The bungled and disastrous war with Israel, the Palestinian Diaspora, the existence of Israel within the Arab lands, the lack of colonialism to create an identification out of a common enemy, and ultimately the question of nationalism itself in a previously Ottoman land, Colluded to add gasoline to the fire of the question of the nation state and the Arab condition (3). 3_

It is known to all that in the last two decades, the Arab and the entire world have seen a general shift in socio-political, cultural and ethnically racial evolutions which have made Arabs on the forefront of the world events. This shift has its direct and indirect influence on the fundamental Arab identity either individual, ethnic, cultural or national; reshaping from relatively static to more complicated dynamic state. Undoubtedly, the Arab world lives on a hot tin roof and unexpected changes; from the gulf war and its outcomes of the permanent military bases and western hegemony to the bloody September 11th events, from the September 11th events to the unjustified occupation and destruction of Iraq, from the occupation of Iraq to the recurrent war between Arabs and Israel in Lebanon (2006) and Palestine (2008&2012), from the Arab-Israeli wars to the emergence of the Awakening socio-political upheavals known as the Young Arab-Spring Non-Violent Revolutions.

The ongoing revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, , Morocco, Algeria, Iraq and Syria; though differ from one country to another, and from the Nonviolent Arab-Spring revolutions to, lastly, the ethically rooted sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shii Muslim groups; Saudi Arabia from one side and Iran from the other side, in Syria, Yemen, Bahrain and Libya. This sectarian encounter led to the emergence of different Extremist and terrorist ethnic groups in different spots of the Arab World. Among these big thorny challenges, Arab societies encounter crucial identity crisis, socially, culturally, ethnically, historically, politically and individually. This complicated situation threatens the Arabs’ survival on the world map as a self-evident nation.

**Arabic Socio-Political identity**

Identity, as a comprehensive and multidisciplinary term, is in itself an interrogative and demonstrative noun. It interrogates “who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others”. It also demonstrates the selfhood, the sense of belonging and self-esteem. Consequently, identity is a collective concept that denotes to individual, gender, ethnic, social, cultural, or national one. Weinreich (1986) gives the definition:

_A person’s identity is defined as the totality of one’s self-construal, in which_
Identity refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities (Fearon: 6). The above definition also includes individuals and societies or collectivities. Both definitions, obviously, refer to a common underlying concept, individually and socially, and bring about the core of the term identity.

Arab socio-political identity has been a real challenge, particularly, after the smart technology, visual literature or digital humanities. Relationships among Arab individuals, ethnic groups, ruling and intellectual elite, social communities, minorities or majorities have been jeopardized, engulfed and no spark of hope to be bridged. This gap is not new or even coincident. It is an accumulation of tens of factors and hundreds of years of challenge, injustice and socio-political hegemonic construction. Hence, identity is fractured because of the socio-political, economic, hegemonic and imperial deficits of the ruling elites in the Arab world. This deficit of the Arab regimes creates a state of distrust, discouragement and dissatisfaction among majority of the Arab peoples.

Likewise, if “The colonist derives his validity, i.e., his wealth, from the colonial system (Fanon: 33)” as has been precisely pointed in the seminal book of Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, then, the postcolonial Dynastical Arab regimes derive their validity from the colonialists to serve and attain the colonists’ policies. These regimes displaced colonizers and, therefore, became its outcome since they are imposed on the Arabs unwillingly. Their validity and authority come from the legacy of colonizers as their hands, from hollow religious men who work day and night in flattering praise of the ruling families, and from the tyrannical policies they apply on the Arab peoples in general. One can observe the ruling families in the Gulf States as a vivid example.

All the ruling regimes In Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Jordan, and Morocco are dynastical, familial, central, hegemonic, and exclusive to limited families, who do never represent the majority. Even the Arab republican or revolutionary ruling systems in Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Algeria, Sudan, Libya…etc. are democratic systems in name, but they are monarchical and dynasties in deeds and practices. Presidents last for three to four decades or till they expire, their close relatives inherit the rule. Therefore, the history of these countries is ‘a series of struggle between two classes of society: the haves and the have-nots’ as Karl Marx, the German critic and philosopher, points out in his Marxist theory. He further asserts that ‘human life was organized around the production of goods. Every society is so arranged that one group always works and the other enjoys the fruit of the former’s labour (2).”

The exclusion of the majority of people in the Arab countries, particularly in the monarchical gulf countries, in decision making or political participation makes it very difficult for them to enjoy full freedom. So, history of these countries, if we fittingly quote Marx’s point, is “nothing but depiction of these inequalities and is always a history of struggle between the two classes which have had different terms of identity description at various periods of history (ibid: 2)” As the majority of people are working for the satisfaction of the ruling families and have no hand in selecting their rulers or even in challenging their policies in these countries. Their unitary national identity is, apparently, imposed from above, by the ruling regime to serve their agenda being in power as long as they can. The ruling families always find way to control the majority or working class through ideologizing the public institutions, government policies, religion…, etc to help them having full power on the ordinary people. This hegemonic culture between ruling class and the people, the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci states, is based on force or domination. Gramsci further writes “every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes (Qtd, in Clingan: 144).” As a result, populations of these countries feel depressed, melancholic and unable to form a collective national identity.

More terribly, in the Arab dynastical ruling regimes, rule is inherited from first generation to another in the same family without consideration to potentialities, qualification or even
consultation of their peoples. In other words, sons and brothers of the rulers inherit the ruling system from their fathers; and sons of the kings become the kings the moment their fathers expire. They have the upper hand over everything, and they decide what is right or wrong for the rest of people. They restore the power in the ruling family, whereas their peoples are directed, treated or manifested like a flock of sheep. People don’t have any right to decide their socio-political life, and hence, their national identity is confiscated. The common slogan they can loudly repeat is (Long live our majestic king). There is no place for freedom, democracy or free power of knowledge. All there is nothing other than the knowledge of blind power practiced by the power centre (regimes) on the margins (peoples).

Besides, the straw that broke the camel’s back in the Arabic-Arabic relationship was the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 2nd, 1990. It came as a result of the arrogant policy of the Kuwaiti government to double increase her oil production exceeding her limits. Backed by Saudi Arabia at that time, Kuwait exploited the Iraqi critical economic situation in which Iraq was. The state of war that lasts for eight years between Iraqi government and Iran as the last, (Iran) was trying to export the Shiite ideological revolution to Iraq and the neighboring countries. Kuwait selfishly challenged the bonds and agreements of oil production, took that foolish step and didn’t realize the daring price it could pay. “This drastically-imaged situation has consciously extended to the rest of the Arab world. The war for Kuwait was a real crisis that destroyed the last vestiges of Arab solidarity, reintroduced direct Western intervention in Arab affairs, allowed the United States to establish a permanent military presence in the Gulf and gave a remarkable increase to militant Islam,” marking a new type of East-West confrontation, from one side and sectarian confrontation among Arab-Islamic factional groups from the other side. Thus, between loss and despair, Arab national identity is manifested.

Arabs’ Cultural Identity

“Today, the Arabs are at a loss. They suffer from a severe identity crisis (Khashan: 1).” In these words, Hilal Khashan opens his very significant book entitled Arabs at the Crossroads: Political Identity and Nationalism. It seems to be a scream of danger by a deadly peacock to the situation the Arab peoples have reached. Arabic national, cultural, socio-political, and even ethnic identity is at a diverted road. Arabic culture nowadays is undergoing a bizarre process of change where the young generation is holding different values and life styles from their ancestors. The youth are confronted and fascinated with the idea of westernization. They copy the way of western lifestyle. In education, the prescribed curricula resemble western systems and adopt English as a foremost language. It’s given greater priority than the mother tongue Arabic Language is. In everyday habits, one finds that Arabs have a western flavor in watching movies, reading books, magazines or literature, listening to music, cutting hair, eating food and even greeting each other, mostly among young generation.

If “national identity describes that condition in which a mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols - have internalized the symbols of the nation ...(Qtd. In Fearon: 4)” then Arabic unique culture, one Arabic language, more or less the same food and traditional habits are what make their national and cultural identity more integrated and united than any other nation. Yet, the cultural conflict the world lives nowadays, directly or indirectly, does affect the basic identity of Arab individuals, societies and the whole nation. Arabs live a real dilemma of identity crisis. Erik Erikson, the professional psychologist and sociolinguist points out that ‘identity crisis means not only a loss of identity but more correctly a loss of ego identity which emerges as a normative stage in the human life cycle (68)’. Nowadays, the Arab nation gives up its cultural identity and has established new imported norms of identity. These bizarre norms have been imported from western societies no doubt. In his article entitled The Loss of Arab American Identity Through Art, Ray Tidewater asserts that:

Modern Islamic art has since developed European styles or completely adopted western cultural elements; resulting in the loss of Arab and Islamic identity. This deprivation of Islamic and Arab art influence has produced an absence in the current creation of post-modern or contemporary Islamic and Arab artistic creation styles. Additionally, the continuing tribulations in the Middle East have also resulted in the destruction of numerous heritage sites, antiquities, and artifacts that once brought a cultural identity to many Arabs (3).

It can be said that Modernization has been re-creating the Arab world from its Classic Islamic and Arab construction to a new post-modern European and western style. In the name of
modernization, traditional Arabic values are replaced with the new western fashion. Wearing traditional clothes became a sign of a fundamentalism, illiteracy and primitivism; whereas wearing new western fashions reflects openness, advancement and modernity. Simplicity, generosity and kindness of the Arabs are considered naivety. The animation of the fundamental collective Arab traditions dashed out. New strange principles have emerged. Harmony among Arab societies disappeared because of the negative role media plays in poisoning solidarity or convergence projects. This media is devoted to shatter and implant hostility between Arab societies in order to help dynasties rule lifetime.

Furthermore, some Arab societies, basically the oil producing Arab Gulf countries, The United Arab Emirates and Qatar are examples; Arabs have become minorities on their homeland. They form less than a quarter of the people living on their homeland. Around three quarters of the population, as reported in the recent statistics, are expatriates, workers and outers. The young Gulf generation finds it difficult to speak Arabic as a mother tongue, means of communication and determiner of their national identity because they are up brought in the laps of foreign nurses who know no Arabic at all.

What adds foil to toil in this issue is that foreign Arab and Muslims living in the Gulf States are cruelly treated, racially and ethnically discriminated and degradingly behaved with by national citizens of these countries. On the contrary, Non-Arabs and non-Muslims, particularly westerners, are politely and majestically treated. This racism along with demographic increase of foreigners has its impact and direct threat not only on the formation of the Arab Gulf societies, but extends to threaten their entire being, identity and culture. With this dangerous situation, ruling systems are busy with conspiring on each other, accusing each other and blaming each other to deepen the gulf. If we say Arabs National Identity is in Jeopardize, we will be accused as extremists who form a danger and national thread. It seems to be so appropriate here to quote James Baldwin’s words, though it is a long extract, to depict the status of collective identity. Baldwin in his essay book entitled The Devil Finds Work (1976) excellently remarks that:

An identity is questioned only when it is menaced, as when the mighty begin to fall, or when the wretched begin to rise, or when the stranger enters the gates, never, thereafter, to be a stranger: the stranger’s presence making you the stranger, less to the stranger than to yourself. Identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self; in which case, it is best that the garment be loose, a little like the robes of the desert, through which one’s nakedness can always be felt, and, sometimes, discerned. This trust in one’s nakedness is all that gives one the power to change one’s robes (63).16

Hence, the evolution of Arab character has, since the liberal age, produced a perplexed individual who cannot manage with complex reality. Many Arab individuals and societies have been culturally, politically and socially westernized. In the name of multiculturalism or globalization, socio-cultural life has been poisoned with the western fashion and every Arab society tries, in a way or another, to imitate west in their lifestyle and fashionable way of life, exactly as the western societies were influenced by the French fashion at the restoration age, exactly after the French 1798 revolution. This blind imitation and overwhelming assimilation to the western fashion is not only restricted to the dressing, food, hair cutting and way of behaving, but extended to include cultural heritage and the way of thinking which threatens the Islamic and Arab identity that was a source of attraction and admiration for centuries.

P R Kumaraswamy, in his research paper entitled Who Am I?: the Identity Crisis in the Middle East, is with the opinion that the decay of the Arab world since its emergence as smaller entities after the ruin of the Ottoman Empire lies not only in the non-democratic regimes, but further to the failure of the states to form and establish a solid ground for a national identity for the Arab nation. He further says,

More than democratic deficit, most countries of the Arab World suffer from the fundamental problem over their national identity. More than three-quarters of a century after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire from which most of them emerged, these states have been unable to define, project, and maintain a national identity that is both inclusive and representative (2).17

Under such circumstances, Arabs nowadays are entirely dependent on the west in everything. They adopted the lifestyle of eating, reading, wearing, sleeping and thinking the way the west wants. They
have neither independent entity, nor collective identity nor a ray of hope in being so in the coming future. This total dependence is a result of the national identity being imposed from above (ruling class) because “national identity means the dynasty that rules the states rather than it being a reflection of the wider population of these nations (4)” P R Kumaraswamy concludes.18

**Ethnic Identity of the Arab Nation**

Arab Ethnic identity is, however, not exempted from the crack existing in the collective identity. Arab World is, majorly, a Muslim society having the same belief and language. As language can be considered as a means of communication and a symbol of identity, religion is also seen as a symbol of ethnic identity. If “identity is used to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture (ibid: 4).” 19

Ethnicity is a key determiner to one’s identity. “Ethnic conflicts are particularly prone to violence because they involve matters of identity.”20 Tracing the ethnic conflict among Arab-Muslims is dated back to the emergence of Islam fourteen centuries ago. The essence of this conflict has taken place between two families; that is Banu Umayyah (Umayyads) and Banu Hashim (Hashemites) which belong to Quraysh tribe (a tribe in Mecca to which Prophet Mohammed PBUH belongs). This conflict on power after the death of Prophet Mohammed PBUH extended when Hashemites claim the right to rule over others because of pertaining the descendants of Prophet Mohammed to their own family tree. The Umayyads and the majority of Muslims rejected the principle of succession of rule justifying that Prophets are Messengers of God and are not sent to succeed rule but rather to convey a divine message. Besides, Islam clearly states that Ruling is Consultation among Muslims and not succession. Thus, those who rejected the succession of rule are accused of being Kharijites; and those who assert the obligation of succession are accused of being factional and innovative Shiites. This conflict reached its climax when the second third and fourth Muslim Caliphs after the death of Prophet Mohammed PBUH were assassinated for the same motives by Muslim factional groups and reached its climax in Mauqia’t Aljamal (the Battle of the Camel) in Basra Iraq, as the major civil war between Muslims. However, “the battle of Basorah, The battle of Camel that took place at Basra, Iraq in 656 between forces allied to Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Prophet Mohammed’s cousin and son-in-law, and the fourth Caliph and Commander of the faithful) and forces allied to Aisha(widow of Prophet Mohammed PBUH, and she is called the mother of the faithful) who wanted justice for the perpetrators of the assassination of the Previous Caliph Othman Ibn Affan”21 and to reconcile the escalating situation between Shi’at Ali and Muawiyyah, the Umayyad leader and Othman’s cousin.

Consequently, the Sunni Shiite conflict evolved among Muslims. It deepened the wound and, like a plague, it transmitted from one generation to another till it became rampant nowadays. This long conflict became a chronic flux in the Islamic relationship. Muslims then divided into two major groups, Sunnis and Shiites. Sunni Muslims, who form the majority of Muslims, believe that some ritual practices and claims by Shiite group, especially the Twelfth Shiite (A lithnaashariah), whose founder is Abdullah Ibn Saba’a, the head of Fitnah (calamity) are refutable, baseless and prohibited. They are innovations and have no authentic link to the fundamental principles of Islam. On the contrary, Shiites groups considers the Sunni groups as the rivalry because they wrongly believe that, prophet hood is to be inherited by them as they are Hashemites, (pertaining to the descendants of prophet Mohammed Peace Be Upon Him). They claim the right to rule over all Muslim as Islam emerged from the house of Hashemites. In short, the Sunni Shiite conflict which extends for a round fourteen century is, basically a familial conflict of identity between Hashemites and Umayyads, who both belong to Quraish tribe, on power. Every family tries either to erase or contain the other rival family because the family bond plays prominent role in determining one’s individual or social identity in the Arab society. Bassiouney asserts that “the importance of family bonds and paternal ancestors is a salient feature in the Arab World. Arabs from different countries define themselves according to the tribe they belong to, to the family they belong to and finally to the country they belong to (99).”22

In the present time, however, Saudi Arabia and Iran are the two axes or centers of Sunni Shiite conflict beyond which the rest of Islamic world is allied. These regimes play with the sectarian card and inflame the sectarian clash among the Muslim nation for their own interests. They manipulate sectarianism to achieve geopolitical ends which resulted in regional catastrophic outcomes. There cannot be a shadow of doubt that this rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran stems from a sectarian identity conflict arising from a time prior to Islam.
The roots of this conflict date back to a rivalry between Arabs and Persians, which continues to this day. The sectarian issue sets a parameter to this rivalry between Riyadh and Tehran, with tensions between Sunnis and Shites that give shape to this competition. The official Islamic belief of Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, does not accept Shia Muslims as true believers. Religion is a neurological issue for both states that grant political and religious legitimacy in Riyadh and Tehran.23

In a nutshell, Arabs Ethnic identity suffers acute crisis and people are discriminated as per their familial roots and ethnic beliefs. This, along with other socio-cultural and political issues, further complicated and escalated the joint Arab ethnic- Identity as an umbrella term under which Arab societies can enjoy equal rights and perceive full freedom of belief and doctrine.

Arab Identity in the Post Arab-Spring Era: The Agony of Birth

In a turning point and an unpredictable moment, The Arab ruling regimes, Arab societies and peoples across the globe woke up on miraculous news. New innovative socio-political upheavals in many Arab countries at the last month of 2010 known as the Young Arab-Spring Peaceful Revolutions (YASPR) have unexpectedly emerged in broad movements. These broad mass movements in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Oman, Morocco, Jordan... etc. are lead and driven by younger generation motivated by genuine freedom and aspirant for a brighter tomorrow. It reflects the state of awakening and self-regains, plurality, openness, entity of identity, and stands for a big dream of one dignified Arab nation. This awakening youth movements drew the attention of the entire world to the fascinating peaceful and civilized way of change in the Arab World; and how the youth gallantly challenged the tyrannical regimes for making better life than the quo status.

In the Arab-Spring socio-political upheavals, Youth of the Arab nation have played vital role in driving these protests in many countries. This role based on making use of the social media, basically Face book & Twitter, to create awareness among people revealing the urgent need to unarmed revolutions and demonstrations for bringing socio-political change that can meet Arab peoples’ hopes and aspirations. These popular uprisings in the Arab world were caused by a combination of economic, political and social deficits. Many commentators consider the Arab-spring as a turning point in the Arab peoples’ destiny. It came in a time; the Arab-Muslim world was pregnant of problems, armed conflicts and was living a very sensitive and crucial condition. One of the Western commentators views the Arab Spring as follows:

On the contrary, youth movements, unfortunately, shocked the dynasties and brought bad news to them. All Arab Regimes, Monarchical, revolutionary, secular or tyrannical with no exception, felt very bad and realized the thread those movements form on their regimes. Exploiting the random and spontaneous movements, the uncharted zeal, the lack of well organization and policy of the youth, these dynasties miscarried this dream in its cradle. Further, they haven’t hesitated to openly ask aid from the historical enemies of Arabs, Israel and America to protect their ruling system sand agendas. The Western intervention in these events worsens the situation and put the Arab identity in predicament. They found an excuse to interfere once again in the Arab Affairs in order to mould the Arab identity as per their wishes. Through their so-called supremacy, hegemonic tools and dirty means, they try to eradicate the Arabic fundamental identity and replant it with a deformed Westernized identity that can be remotely controlled and instructed.

The ambitions and hopes of the young Arab spring generation of a unitary, democratic, strong and competitive nation, however, are shattered, discouraged and assassinated by the radical regimes of the ruling families of the Gulf States, particularly, by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. These regimes’ attitudes against the popular uprisings was shaped by their own geopolitical objectives; to isolate their countries from the winds of change, protect the survival of monarchical regimes and weaken the newly democratic elected regimes in Tunisia.
Egypt, Libya and Yemen. “Saudi Arabia used its military power, political influence and financial generosity to contain the effects of the revolts in the Arabian Peninsula, especially in Bahrain, Yemen and Oman”.

The first democratic elected Egyptian president is thrown, via a military coup and put behind the bars. Ironically, he was replaced by a tyrannical military commander in chief in a counter revolution supported by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates states. He received all type of mental and financial support. The same drawback step took place in Libya, Tunisia and Yemen because genuine democracy brought the Muslim Brotherhood group into power. Now, these countries live a hellish war under sectarian terms inflamed by the key players of the region, Saudi Arabia, Iran and United Arab Emirates. The ruling families of these States were afraid of the awakening upheavals of the Arab spring youth so that they accelerated to murder the transformation of Arab societies in the direction of genuine democracy because this awareness threatens their beings. These states have been unable to define projects and maintain national identity that is both inclusive and representative. More than democratic deficit, the ruling elites in these countries and in the Arab World in general, suffer from the fundamental problem over their national identity.

Consequently, the dynasties, possessing the soft tools of power, that is Money and media, they devoted their entire efforts to plot, end and work against any Arabic social movement that aims to set the Arab world free of the external interferences in the Arab affairs. The recent events have unveiled the masks of the criminal ruling systems which becoming increasingly fearful of any change in the region. They believe that the unforeseen changes will obviously, produce undesired results for the tyrannical regimes and cut the hand of external interference in the Arab issues. The result of the blind policies brought the Arab world to a destructive civil war under sectarian slogans. The undergoing war is openly backed and supported by theses regimes. Many extremist groups in the Arab world receive their support, training and planning in these countries for one and sole purpose, to keep their dynasties away of what is happening in the rest of the Arab world. Their policy is to be strong in a weak surrounding. Ruling elites of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Iran are, fittingly implying Taslima Nasreen’s twitting on her twitter account “cash machines of terrorists” nowadays. They support the factional extremist Islamic groups to kill each other. They use their military power, political influence and financial generosity to shatter the unitary identity and contain the terrorist groups; then direct them to serve their plans. Anyway, what marks the Youth Arab-Spring upheavals from post-colonial upheavals is that Arab-Spring era is that it yet originates for a new era of Post Arab Spring Theory which is to emerge against the hegemony of the ruling dynasties, to resist the tyranny of the ruling powers; and aims at genuine reforms and democratic changes in the current Arabic socio-political situation. These ‘within’ upheavals woke the spirit of the Arab youth to establish a solid ground for Arab solidarity, unified identity and cultural plurality. From within or from below, from the people, identity is to be imposed at the above. Whereas postcolonial era emerged to depict the East-West conflict that took place after the Ottoman Empire, post Arab-Spring era is marked by the internal-internal conflict among Arabs for a space of freedom, a democratic ruling system, for integral Arab national identity and for a competitive Arab nation retrieving the glorious past of their ancestors.

Conclusion

Tracing the roots of the Identity crisis in the Arab world is not an easy chore. It is a thorny task that requires deep investigation. The portrayed image of the Arabic identity in the recent time is so discouraging, lost and frightful. There is no glimmer of hope to overtake the current tragic situation as long as Identity, in its different concepts, is confiscated and imposed from the above.

Arabs are astray and their loss is caused by their ruling and intellectual elite. They contributed in driving the Arabic nation to a gloomy tunnel. Socio-politically, Arab Peoples have no right to decide who rules them. Identity is imposed from above according to the policies that are charted to serve the dynasties. Arabs are so late when compared to the west or the other democratic states in different part of the world. Culturally, all Arab societies have adopted new norms of life and western lifestyle. People imitate blindly and social media has its own impact on the behaviors of individuals and societies. This cultural change threatens the Arab entity and uniqueness. Ethnic identity is also devastating and resulted Sunni versus Shiite conflict. This crack in the Muslims’ misrepresentation of Islam created wrong conceptions about Islam. It is introduced in two types, Sunni and Shiite Islam; though the fundamentals of Islam are clearly stating that there is only one true religion of Islam, the religion of love, tolerance, peace, harmony and brotherhood.
However, Arabs and Muslims, nowadays, are killing each other in the name of Islam. Ethnic factional groups twist and justify their deeds in the name of Islam.

Arab Spring revolutions have exposed and unmasked the traitors and patriots of the Arab state leaders and untied the internal dynamics of protest and political change. It gave a message that none of the Arab rulers respect their peoples’ will, revealed that Arabs lack a collective project of development; and brought the hope of all Arabs to come out of this gloomy tunnel. Yet, the dynasties have miscarried this dream by leading counter-revolution because the birth of unified Arabs causes the removal of these dynasties, exactly as Roland Barthe’s view of the Author-Reader relationship in his powerful essay ‘The Death of the Author’. The dynasties of the Arab world will live as long as the role of the majority of people is confiscated, freedom is absent, minority governs the majority, Arab nation is weak and divided; and chaos replaces settlement. Now, the reaction of the Arab youth towards the hegemony of the ruling systems is to join extremist groups like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Al-Nusra as long as their roles are challenged and their potentialities are neglected. They have no other option to determine themselves as active and effective participant. Among all these harbingers and dangerous indications, Arab Identity is in astray and will remain so till genuine and internal changes take place and help new generations form solid bases for free unitary Arabism, national identity and one Arab entity.

End Notes

17. ibid. pp. 2.
19. ibid. p,4
26. https://mobile.twitter.com/teslimanasreen/status/66575028118828033

Consulted References

1. Leysan Khakimova, Yan Bing Zhang, & Jeffery A. Hall. Conflict Management Styles: The Role of Ethnic Identity and


