

**THE NATIONAL ANTHEM ORIGIN, SYMBOLISM, AND FUNCTION
“MODELS OF ARAB NATIONAL ANTHEMS”**

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Abstract

This research aims to shed light on the beginnings of the formation of the national anthem in the Arab countries, and the function performed by the national anthem. After the emergence of Arab political entities in the last century, the nascent countries were inspired by the Western tradition of having a national anthem for each country. The national anthem has been one of the symbols that the nascent Arab states tried to exploit to enhance the association between the citizens and to create a single identity among the members of the state. It is usually played in official ceremonies and is a sign of state sovereignty. National anthems are classified into three main categories: the first calling for the ruler's safety, the second referring to the battles fought by the nation, and the third expressing patriotic sentiments.

Key words: National Anthem, Identity, Imagined communities, Pan-Arabism.

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Introduction

There are almost no studies in Arabic that take the national anthem into account. So, this research is kind of an adventure in the nowhere space where it falls within the framework of other attempts by researchers and intellectuals to crystallize the causes that have had an undeniable impact on creating our national identity through the perceptions about ourselves and the others. The study aims at recognising the extent of association between the national anthem and its contribution to building and affecting our political consciousness. Moreover, the context in which such attempts had been cannot be neglected. The early years of the Arab Spring with all its failures made the intellectuals and researchers distract attention from the external powers despite being a convenient 'porte-manteau' for all setbacks. In the past decade, it was clear that much of the deficit stems from our selves. That reinforces the legitimacy of the throwback to the self as an awakening that aims at finding out the sides of deficiency and trying to avoid them.

Throughout the human history, numerous norms of people were emerged where they aimed to differentiate between "WE" and "THEY", beginning from the tiny family, to the clan or the tribe, and ending up with the nation. In the tribal communities, the differentiation is based on the blood bond. However, in old Greece was the rise of the first form of a state- the city, which was later developed to the Roman Empire, where the Roman citizen had become every individual on the Roman lands regardless of their races. Nevertheless, this perception had been vanished by the interference of religion in the public life. That led to the rise of the religious states that associate the citizenship with the religion. Anyone who does not embrace the formal religion of the state is considered a "Dignified Person" where they have no rights as those "citizens" who embrace that religion.

With the beginning of the modern age, the human communities started to consider themselves away from the previous propositions based on the religion bond that is faded in interest for the nation bond, which relies on speaking one language and living in a specific geographical area. This contemporary conception does not negate the absence of "Homeland" concept in the past. However, the concept of national state is based on changing the religious sectarianism into another based on one language and one land. It can be oversimplified: affiliation among human communities passes through stages respectively: tribe, religion, and nationalism.

Late by the end of the nineteenth century came the recent understanding of affiliation (the national affiliation) to our regions. With the spread of national concepts that widely accompanied the increasing exposure on the west, this national factor was leaked to the public and started to take a growing space in politics where its impact had been duplicated with time. By the end of the World War I, it became the main factor in defining the people's political consciousness.

Before the thunderstorm of the national concepts, there is no differentiation, in the Ottoman state for example, among people as "Turks", "Arabs", "Kurds", etc, since the religion bond was tying them. The Muslim who moves to the Ottoman state becomes immediately a citizen who has all the rights provided by the state to its people since he embraces the same religion. The state's and people's definition of citizenship is based on the religion criterion, people of the Ottoman state are divided into Muslims and Non-Muslims. The impact of this criterion was bleached with the rise of the national concept where the Arabs, the Turks, the Albans, and others started to acknowledge themselves according to their races, i.e.: to their mother tongue.

The early national movement began to ask for autonomy and a recognition of Arabic as a formal language in the Arab countries. However, those portents have rapidly become a movement of national liberation that aimed at gaining independence from the "the Ottoman occupation", particularly with the realization of the Arab elite that the Ottoman authority is

not in harmony with granting the Arab countries any of the demands whose the elite have asked for.

In that context, the nascent national ideology was founded by the educated elite who focused their speech on two main determinants to distinguish the people they address: the language, and the narrative of the Lost Arab State. This tendency was necessary to unite the people who belong to many governates that were not tied culturally and economically by the Ottoman state, due to its feudal system and its Islamic heritage to grant the liberty in administrating the internal affairs to local communities.

From this starting point, the elite started to speak about the narrative of regaining the Lost state, and gaining independence from the foreign rule through searching for national symbols alluded from mythologies, shared historical memory, and the common public culture². Yet, this attempt had failed with the vanishment of ambitions to establish one Arab state; particularly with Sykes–Picot Agreement, and the following incidents that divided specifically the Arab Orient into a bunch of states, that began to seek for their own liberty from the occupation, but bearing in mind the profound hope to establish a unified Arab state.

The national identity is like all other hobbies that man ought to acquire from his environment and surroundings, and education plays a role in directing it. There are important means in this process of education as the national flag, the military outfits, and the national anthem. All contributes to building the nation and preserving it³. These symbols are an apparent announcement of the national identity which, in its essence, takes the role of the contemporary Totems⁴. The major role that is played by those symbols in the early stages of building a state, or in the eras in which the state finds itself encountering existential challenges, interprets the importance of attending such symbols and the fury of individuals in case of their absence or insult. However, this attention fades and vanishes with the stability of the state and the absence of conflict with the neighboring states⁵.

The national anthem has been one of the symbols that the nascent Arab states tried to exploit to enhance the association between the citizens and their states that were in urgent need to those symbols to include all communities and sects in one frame, specifically with the absence of any clear-cut definition of the national identity. Yet, this symbol in its own often has an unstable awareness between the borders that were drawn by the occupation between the fledgling states and the dream state that is portrayed by the Arab elite in the beginnings of the past century. This issue was clearly shown in the severe fragmentation between the anthem's ambition and its national horizon on the one hand, and the necessity to withdraw into its own cocoons within a geographical space where finding itself obliged to represent it on the other hand.

The National Anthem

The imperial states has no national anthems with its traditional meaning; however, that does not eliminate the existence of rhythms and poems usually used in wars. The imperial state mainly consists of a group of peoples that are often unified neither by language nor by land but by a belief, whereas the national anthem is based on the remnants

² Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 14.

³ Pal Kolstø, *National symbols as signs of unity and division*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol: 29, No. 4, (2006), 676.

⁴ Karen A. Ceruio, *Symbols and the World System: National Anthems and Flags* *Sociological Forum*, Vol:8, No. 2, (1993), 244.

⁵ Michael Billig differentiates between the stable and unstable countries in terms of caring about symbols. He notices that people hardly ever care or pay attention to the flag that is flattering on the state institutions in the stable countries as the US, New Zealand, and Britain. However, people in the unstable countries pay more attention to the flag and it may trigger in them patriotic feelings. See: Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London: SAGE, 1995), 8.

of the previous religion bond. By the demolition of the imperial state whose the religious factor with its symbolism represents the joining point among its individuals, land becomes the main and only criterion in determining people's affiliation within the nascent national state.

On the contrary of the natural development of the rise of the state in the western world, the state in our countries arose through a complicated process that resulted in a preemie popped up through the standards of the occupying countries which often gathered territories of different traditions, customs and cultural heritage. When these fledgling entities started to establish inexistent "national" traditions and build new institutions, they were inspired by, inter alia of the European traditions, the necessity of the presence of national anthems. So, on the contrary of the national anthem in the western countries, the national anthem in our regions was created artificially. It is hardly ever to find a lyric or a poem that developed in parallel with the growth of the national sentiment as occurred in many European countries. In our countries, the state came through a Caesarean section like many states that arose as a result of certain international balances without growing up naturally. Nevertheless, the nascent states have tried to invest in the anthem to create a national sentiment among the individuals who have already been tied by other disintegrated bonds. Thus, "competitions" were popped up in which the nascent states ask the poets to initiate writing an anthem that expresses it.

Going back to the discussions that accompanied selecting the first Egyptian national anthem is useful as they will show us the major criteria that were set by the Arbitration Committee to evaluate the national anthem and the critiques on the selected anthem. A copy of these critiques is available in Addiwan book, particularly in the chapter specified by Alakkad to criticise the national anthem written by Ahmed Shawqi to be the first Egyptian anthem after the revolution of 1919.

Many strict conditions were mentioned by Alakkad for the national anthem; some are specific to the committee as being acquainted with other national anthems, the expertise in confining the rhymes with the meanings, and the knowledge of the communities' ethics and morals and their psychological stages⁶.

In addition to his notices on the fragility and weirdness of the anthem's expressions, Alakkad criticises the moral character of the anthem and the predominance of the preaching aspect, instead of being enthusiastic spoken by the people and convenient for all ages. In his opinion, that proposed anthem does not apply to what the national anthem must be where it should be good for the national pride, giving rise of self-enthusiasm, and be accompanied by the rhyme that "strengthens the fainting hearts and lifts up the sluggish mettle, where if being heard by the weak, become energetic; and being listened to by the desperate, hope storms in their hearts; being heard by the enemy, shiver fearfully; since the national anthem, in his viewpoint, is the voice of the nation in the ears of history⁷.

Later, most Arab national anthems would overcome those rhetorical pitfalls. Scrutinizing the national anthems in the Arab world elaborates remarkable rhetorical characteristics and high levels of poetics in almost all those anthems that result from the knowledge of what the national anthem must be. This knowledge is mostly the fruit of being acquainted with the experiences of other nations and states in this field.

The national anthem usually reflects the state's history, its patriots' struggle, and its people's rituals and traditions, and expresses the national identity by referring to specific symbols and notable figures in the collective consciousness. That happens through celebrating the magnificence and pride of the people. The main function of the anthem is to provoke the patriotic sentiment among the citizens, to remind them of the glory of their

⁶ Alakkad, Abbas Mahmoud, & Al-Mazini, I. Addiwan in Literature and Criticism. 4th Ed. (Cairo, People House, 1997), 45.

⁷ Ibid, 47-48

nation, the beauty of their land, and to strengthen the sense of affiliation to the land in spite of their different races, religions, and beliefs. Pavkovic and Kelen state that the anthem usually begins with the speech about the possessed traits of the nation, and in the forefront comes courage and strength, and this courage appears legitimate in the context of the nation's defense of its right to freedom and life. The national anthem also contains a tacit disdain for the other, a supposed enemy to whom it is necessary to show some kind of defiance⁸.

Not is a priority for the national anthem, as we have seen, to broadcast moral sermons. For this reason, the values of tolerance, cooperation with and solidarity with the other will be completely dismissed. The culture of war will be celebrated, and peace will be disdainful. Due to this symbolic violence, the anthem contributes to charging the individual with chauvinism based on the abjection of the other, the diminishing of his dignity, and the lack of sympathy for him; yet, enhancing the solidarity of the community for which he is a spokesperson, and trying to unite its individuals with the general objective.

Talking about the other leads us to touch on a little bit the values the national anthem calls for. The national anthem mainly dedicates in the collective consciousness the rejection of equality with the other. The other is despised, neither possible to cooperate with him, nor respect his right to existence, nor his right to freedom. This process occurs quietly and in a way that does not make the recipient feel the abjection of the other. The language of symbolic violence is mitigated, and the level of direct hostile feelings is being weakened in most cases by preferring the use of linguistic euphemisms and symbolic references to replace the outright hostile expressions. Among the precise observations raised by Pavkovic and Kelen is that national anthems are devoid of praising nations with wisdom and foresight or touch upon nations' possession of knowledge and science. Moreover, nations, as they appear in their national anthems, are cranky, violent, and tend toward antagonism and war at the slightest provocation. Their military figures or military symbols are often invoked in the national anthems. The conclusion is the absence of mental traits from the national anthem⁹. However, both Pavkovic and Kelen fail to prevail the reasons behind this absence. In their opinion, the absence of wisdom is inexplicable. It is a view that ignores the fact that these anthems are intended to show courage in front of the other and which implicitly assumes the absence of any rationality or wisdom in their treatment. Further, the practice of symbolic violence implied in the words of the anthem is a first step into paving the way for the physical violence that the anthem seeks to instill in the collective consciousness.

The national anthem is a mean among others employed by the state to reinforce affiliation and create an "identity" through the desire to transform people of different origins, roots and passions into an Imagined Community. So seems that, it bears a predicate that aims to emphasize the homogeneity of society, and to mold the collective self into one. The ego in: "O my world, repeat MY anthem¹⁰" speaks on behalf of the community, whereas the predicate is: "O my world, repeat OUR anthem". Thus, the individual is tied with the community to the extent that he is able to speak on their behalf and represent them in front of others. The community, in brief, includes identical and similar individuals where any one may act on the behalf of others without any sense of distinction or difference. The congruence is perfect and there is no room for individual differences.

The national anthem enhances the individual's feeling of association with the homeland through transcending the individual interest, and playing the strings of love and the depth of affiliation to the imagined identity. One of the functions performed by the anthem is to create a kind of social, intellectual, and political equality among different

⁸ Aleksandar Pavković, Christopher Kelen, *Anthems and the making of the nation state: Identity and Nationalism in the Balkans*, (London, New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016), 27.

⁹ Ibid, 27.

¹⁰ The Yemeni Anthem

individuals, and to develop a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the imagined community. Thus, the anthem tends to resemble hymns that are played on occasions/rituals in which the community is supposed to find their imagined identity present. If this point is taken into account, the anthem becomes a title for the state in front of its self and others. Since any religion has basic texts that people get to know by reading, the national anthem is one of the necessary entry points to understanding the way the state acknowledges itself. Such comparison is encouraged by the fact that the national anthem requires certain rituals where the most important of which are standing ready, silence, stillness and immobility. All are obligatory duties in worship.

One of the symbolic indicia of the anthem is that it is a title of sovereignty where it is played in places under the authority of the state. There are two locations where the national anthem is regularly played: in schools at the beginning of school hours, and in military barracks at the beginning of the training day; and sometimes at the end of it, which is accompanied by lowering the flag. It is also played on official occasions such as receiving a foreign official figure and in international sports competitions.

In addition to this symbolic function, there is the educational one. The national anthem is taught to students in order to acknowledge themselves. Most countries in the world include the national anthem among the songs or poetic texts that children must memorize. It often appears on the first page of school textbooks¹¹. However, it is not to forget the fact that the national anthem is not a written text that clearly expresses the identity of the nation. Further, it does not “aim to answer the question: who are the people who perform the national anthem? Rather, it does clarify the identity of those performing the anthem through a series of pictures and images¹². Children are often taught how to express feelings while playing the national anthem. In the Syrian anthem, for example, the listener is supposed to raise his chest up and feel proud and dignified. Furthermore, the national anthem is usually the most popular anthem or poem in the country, as all citizens are supposed to memorize. However, it differs from all other poetic texts since the pleasure or the aesthetic value is not the goal behind its recitation, even though being accompanied by music. Rather, the goal is to strengthen the patriotic spirit among citizens and to create systems of symbolic signs that bring them all together.

Therefore, one of the most important functions of the national anthem is to evoke feelings of pride and patriotism, and to rally the people around the symbolic concept. The political system is unable to build a nation without invoking the traditions, symbols and rituals that contribute to the formation of the identity of its citizens. The anthem also has another function, which is to water “hatred” towards the different other who is seen as a “potential enemy”. The opponent in the sports stadiums can turn into an enemy in the battlefield, as the sports arena is a polite image of the conflict one. Thus, what the national anthem does in this context is to strengthen conflict with other identities that are seen different¹³.

Opposing the national anthem often appears among individuals who do not feel a sense of affiliation to the country that is represented by the anthem as belonging to a minority, as well as among those who oppose the regime that is represented by the anthem. Although the anthem as a social activity contributes to the formulation of social identity, the response of citizens is varied. It is well-known, for example, that minorities have a weaker association with the national identities, and, therefore, their response to the anthem differs from that one of the majority which makes up the country. Yet, these are, of course, all

¹¹ The Turkish case is archetypical in this tendency. All school textbooks start with the national anthem.

¹² Aleksandar Pavković, Christopher Kelen, 20.

¹³ Karen A. Ceruio, 244.

assumptions awaiting empirical studies to be confirmed, although there are a number of studies in the English-speaking countries that confirm what has been aforementioned¹⁴.

To solve this dilemma, some ethnically and culturally mixed countries, which consist of different communities, resorted to several methods to overcome what the national anthem might provoke from a feeling of lack of full citizenship for those communities. So, they cleared up the words, and kept only the music since the adoption of specific national words in the anthem may create tension among other nationalities as Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁵. Therefore, in some countries there are two versions of the national anthem in the country's two official languages as Belgium¹⁶.

Models of the National Anthems

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the British Anthem is the oldest in the world. It officially became the national anthem in 1825 AD, although it was popular as a national hymn that is used in royal ceremonies since the mid-18th century. The encyclopedia adds that most European countries imitated Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by adopting their own national anthems¹⁷.

National anthems are classified into three main categories by the Encyclopedia Britannica: the first calling for the ruler's safety like the British one, the second referring to the battles fought by the nation such as the Marseilles, and the third expressing patriotic sentiments like the Canadian anthem¹⁸. According to Pavkovic and Kelen, the national anthems in most cases contain two to three of the previous elements, with one of the elements outweighing the others¹⁹. The oldest forms of national anthems, as mentioned by the encyclopedia, are the songs that call for the ruler's safety. Therefore, less ancient are the ones that call for taking up arms such as the Marseilles. However, this type of anthems is no longer accepted now in its classic form, especially after the formation of international organizations and the conditions that follow for the acceptance of member states including considering such calls as incitement to hatred and violence.

By extrapolating the Arab national anthems, it can be said with much simplification, that the anthems in the Arab monarchies belong to the first type. The other two are those that dominate the national anthems in the Arab republics with varying degrees of presence for each, and with the emergence of some characteristics that need more extensive research. The Lebanese anthem, for example, shows a strong regional tendency and a great focus on the "Lebanism" around which the current Lebanon was founded.

Reviewing the national anthems in the Arab republics shows a mostly absolute predominance of the third category which expresses feelings of love and pride for the nation, the homeland and history. The Algerian anthem is excluded here since it was composed during the war of liberation against the French occupation and it falls under the category that calls for revolution and taking up arms in the face of the enemy.

1. Calling for the ruler's safety

The Jordanian national anthem is almost entirely dedicated to glorifying the king, unlike the anthems in other countries with hereditary systems in which the call for the ruler comes in a more general context that is the glorification of the homeland and the pride in its position and its Arab history. Its approach is based on Sharia, as in the national anthems of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain. The reference to the king or the prince appears in a

¹⁴ Aleksandar Pavković, Christopher Kelen, 14-15

¹⁵ Ibid, 18.

¹⁶ Hang, Xing. Encyclopedia of National Anthems, (Lanham, Maryland, and Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2003), 59.

¹⁷ Encyclopedia BRITANNICA 2016, national anthem.

¹⁸ Encyclopedia BRITANNICA 2016, national anthem

¹⁹ Aleksandar Pavković, Christopher Kelen, 20.

single verse line in the anthems of Morocco, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia where the mention of the Prince is restricted to one verse line out of the seven verses that make up the Kuwaiti anthem. The same applies to the Saudi anthem, and to a less extent, the Moroccan one where the King is mentioned in conjunction with the motto: “God, the Homeland, the King” with which the anthem is ended up. In terms of content, the Omani anthem is divided into two equal parts. In the first part, the citizens pray to God to preserve His Majesty the Sultan; and in the second part, they are proud of Oman’s Arab history which dates back to the era of the blessed prophecy followed by a call to shine light over the entire universe and for Oman to enjoy goodness and eternal peace. In contrast to this uneven presence of the ruler, be he a king, a prince or a sultan, in the national anthems of countries with hereditary systems, the national anthems of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates come out of this classification since they do not contain any mention of the ruler. That justifies inserting them, in our viewpoint, under the category of gratitude to the Nation and the Homeland.

With regard to the wide presence of the king in the Jordanian national anthem, it is largely due to the fact that it is the oldest in the Arab monarchies, as it was consistent with the classical framework of the monarchy. This antiquity makes it closer to the form of the classic Arabic eulogies being flavoured by contemporary values that fit the nature of our era.

Long live the king *Long live the king*

His position sublime,
His banners waving in glory supreme.

We achieved our goal *On the day you revived for*
us,

A revolution gives us our motivation!
Flying over the shoulders of the highest comets.

O king of Arabs, *From the best prophet you have.*

The honour of dynasty,
Talked about in the depths of books!

All the youthful men, *Are your armed*
armies

His determination never dies out!

Getting from your meaning *a symbol of well-being!*

O king of Arabs, *From the best prophet you have.*

The honour of dynasty,
Talked about in the depths of books!

May you stay the light and the guide, *A master in being away of all sins and*
wrong-doing,

Living your life happily and well-respected!

Under your flying flag *rests the glory of all Arabs.*

O king of Arabs, *From the best prophet you have.*

The honour of dynasty,
Talked about in the depths of books!²⁰

²⁰ Al-Refai. Abdulmonim. Poetry of Abdul-Monim Al-Refai. Ibrahim Al-Kofji (collecting and Documenting), 1st Ed. (Amman, The New Company, 2003), p.269.

The Jordanian anthem calls for the King to keep his position sublime, and to keep his banners waving in glory supreme. From the very beginning, the Jordanian anthem apparently relies on a lexicon derived from a deserted world. Avoiding the word “*Malik*” [mæ.li:k] “king” may stem from a desire to surpass the word repetition stylistically and linguistically, and to replace it with the word “*Malik*” [mæ.li:k] with a different impact due to the scarcity of its use. Being used in this context, this scarcity has an impact on the recipient rather than the other word “*Malik*” [mæ.li:k] “king”. However, it includes another desire which is to try to create a stereotype that digs into the recipient’s subconscious and establishes an analogy between the king and a religious celestial world. It is not by coincidence in this context that the words “*His position sublime, Flying over the shoulders of the highest comets*” are repeated in a clear reference to the transcendence of the King and his abandonment to the world around him.

From a political point of view, it is declared that the values of the Jordanian state are the values of the Arab revolution. Therefore, the unitary ideas, principles and values on which it was based were the foundations of the Arabs’ independence from the Ottoman Empire after the Arabs’ increased awareness of themselves as a distinguished nation by language, religion, history, and the goals related to unity, freedom and independence²¹. Examining the Jordanian anthem reveals other values as the Bedouin values of which honor and pride in lineage are the most important characteristics. The anthem also includes traditional equestrian values including a celebration of courage “A master in being away of all sins and wrong-doing”, and of valor and bravery “His banners waving in glory supreme.”

The language in the Jordanian anthem is characterized by a rhetorical glow that covers the weakness resulting from repetition, although the latter usually leads to monotony. Yet, in this place it sends in the recipient’s mind a sense of the timelessness of the king. This is well-aware by the anthem’s writer who deliberately establishes “the king’s love and his majesty in the souls of the young.”²² This linguistic lexicon, which the anthem derives from the religious field, sheds light on the characteristics of the symbolic world that the anthem seeks to consolidate in the recipient’s consciousness. What the Jordanian anthem engraves mainly in the collective conscience is creating an isthmus between the ruler (the King) and the citizens. Such an isthmus cannot be bypassed at all. The king descends from the prophetic dynasty from which he derives his entitlement to the crown, and also inherits his honor and lineage. Further, the prophetic lineage itself descends from the last prophet who had contact with the celestial world; thus, the king is a light and guidance. He derives his light from the Muhammadan light, and his actions do not also come to falsehood, as he is a guide for those who stray from the right path. The king has an honor that others do not. An honor conveyed by books which at the forefront on Arab awareness is the Holy Qur’an, the first written book in the history of Arabic.

The Jordanian national anthem does not refer to any geographical space or signs, because its main goal is to install the image that it paints of the king, as a king over all Arabs. Since being a king over the Arabs, there is no need for geographical symbols as long as the Arab land is known in the recipients’ minds. In this sense, the king becomes the Caliph, and occupies his symbolic post in the consciousness with an essential difference that the king, here, is a king over the Arabs alone.

2. Expressing feelings of gratitude to the nation

Most Arab national anthems fall under this category. There are two main methods through which this category is embodied: expressing gratitude, love and pride for the nation, or describing the nation’s traits and its cultural heritage which makes it worthy of gratitude.

²¹ Khamash, Majd Addin. *Citizenship and National Identity in Jordan and the Arab World*. 1st Ed. (Amman, Al’aan press, 2019), 59.

²² Ibid, 64.

The latter includes the land, the knowledge, the great deeds, and the outstanding figures²³. Among the anthems that combine the two methods is the Syrian anthem, which will be studied in detail, for reasons that will become clear at the time.

*Guardians of the homeland, upon you be peace,
Our proud spirits refuse to be humiliated.
The den of Arabism is a sacred sanctuary,
and the throne of the suns is a preserve that will not be subjugated.*

*The quarters of Levant are towers in height,
which are in dialogue with the zenith of the skies.
The quarters of Levant are towers in height,
which are in dialogue with the zenith of the skies.
A land resplendent with brilliant suns,
becoming another sky or almost a sky.*

*The flutter of hopes and the beat of the heart,
are on a flag that united the entire country.
Is there not blackness from every eye,
and ink from every martyr's blood?*

*Our spirits are defiant and our history is glorious,
and our martyrs' souls are formidable guardians.
Our spirits are defiant and our history is glorious,
and our martyrs' souls are formidable guardians.
From us is al-Walīd, and from us is al-Rashīd.
So why then shall we not lead, why then shall we not rise?²⁴*

By scrutinizing the Syrian anthem, it is noticed that it pays tribute to “*Guardians of the homeland*” with noble and lofty souls at the beginning, then describes the country in a profoundly poetic expression: “*the den of Arabism*”, and then moving to the celestial world where the homeland becomes a throne for the sun, and a forbidden zone for the gentiles. The text delves more into the realm of poetics, talking about the flutter of hopes, and limping over the flag that united the countries that were torn into sectarian and regional states. It asserts - like all other national anthems - that red is a symbol of the martyrs' blood. Then it bounces in a clever way from the present to the past, reminding of the long-standing glory of the Umayyad and Abbasid states. It ends with a speech on sovereignty.

What are the main features the Syrian anthem is trying to devote and call for?

By going beyond the poem's rhythm that was created on the Almoteqareb meter - a meter that is suitable for violence and cruelty, as scholars have noted²⁵, the language that is profound in poetics disrupts the logical thinking mechanism of what the national anthem

²³ Aleksandar Pavković, Christopher Kelen, 21.

²⁴ Mardam Bey, Khalil. Poetry Collection of Khalil Mardam Bey. Jamil Salieba (Presenter), Adnan Mardem Bey (Supervisor), (Damascus, The Arab scientific assembly, Damascus, n.d). pp:169- 170

²⁵ Fakhouri, Mahmoud, Rhythms of Arabic Poetry. (Aleppo: Publishings of Aleppo University, 1996), 27.

bears and takes advantage of the recipient's fall under its rhetorical influence to convey the intended messages to the audience. Unlike any national anthem in Europe from which we borrowed this tradition, the national anthem emerged in our countries with an external "Other" threatening the homeland, stalking its independence, and seeking to control and colonize it because it appeared in a transitional stage from the authority of the colonial state (and sometimes under its control) to a stage of national authority. From this historical situation, the anthem bears in its words the national concerns at that stage (The Algerian anthem is a perfect model of this issue). That is why it should be listened to the signals that come out of the anthem which shows where the compass indicator of the collective unconscious is heading at that stage, and the ideology on which the nascent state is based.

What the anthem is trying to consolidate in the collective consciousness is to define the features of the nature of Homeland which it seeks to convey a feeling towards: from an innate feeling to a political and legal concept in which the connection to the land rises; from a simple sentimental state to a general state that encompasses the entire land of the country. How, then, is that reflected in the Syrian anthem?

Two main determinants control the vision presented in the Syrian anthem: the national dimension that is Arabism, and the geographical dimension that is the Levant, and what is meant is the historical Levant. These two determinants should be considered in the context of what is not mentioned in the discourse, as the national anthem bears within its expressions a response to another discourse that constitutes an obsession and a present or assumed threat. The two dimensions that threaten the national entity, and are not mentioned: the issue of Turkification which posed a threat to the Arabic language, and the Zionist threat represented by Balfour Declaration.

Pan-Arabism is the ideology on which the Syrian state was founded following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. It is a cornerstone in the conception of the nascent state about itself, and in the formation of its identity, that distinguishes it from others. It is – not to forget- a reaction against another act whose goal was to erase the Arab character. In fact, the nationalistic idea was widely and deeply successful because it has, over the course of a century, devoted itself through education and the media and become part of the Syrian personality and beyond the framework of accountability. However, the most dangerous thing about ideology is when it becomes part of the general culture and a component of the personality, and transcends criticism which becomes at that moment an attack on the sanctities and pillars around which the citizens gather; or in other words: "Working to weaken the nation's psyche". In this sense, nationalism has turned into a final given that falls outside the circle of discussion and accountability.

This is the reason for the dominance of the national dimension over the religious one in the Syrians' collective conscience. So, this hegemony is evident in the absence of any purely Syrian patriotism in the collective imagination. As Syria itself is part of a whole, the absence of the Syrian national dimension is a natural outcome of this nationalistic horizon that was formulated at the end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginnings of the formation of the fledgling Syrian state. This ideology would not come true without the collapse of the religion bond that resulted in the Arab countries breaking out of the Ottoman rule. The anthem expresses a quest to create a new imagined community based on a national political system which is in complete opposition to the previous religious system.

The national anthem sometimes includes references to geographical space, such as mountains, rivers, and seas. It is an attempt that falls within the context of confirming the geographical unity which many believe is one of the essential conditions in the emergence of the nation/state. The Syrian anthem, like many others, describes the geographical location of the country. Yet, neither a specific city nor a specific geographic area is mentioned in the anthem, but rather the description is done through a suggestive symbolism. This land in the

national anthem is not Syria with its recognized borders between countries; but Levant, a term that clearly refers to the historical Levant.

Back to the geographical determinant, it can be found out that it has vanished in the broader and wider national dimension. It is unified in an area extending from the ocean to the Gulf, without forgetting that the usurpation of Palestine, the severing of Lebanon, and the transformation of Transjordan into an independent state has caused a deep wound to the collective consciousness of the Syrians. Its effects remained in the way these political entities are viewed and dealt with, by the Syrian state itself as well as the individuals alike.

However, the military nature of the contents in the national anthem is the most dangerous because, from the first part, it makes the country the property of those who are entrusted to guard it - does anyone guard the country except the military? - and specify them alone with "upon you be peace" as the rhetoricians say here. This dependence on the military force will have its harmful effects on the military's usurpation of the state at a later stage, as if it were their property. This does not mean, of course, that this process came about due to the influence of the anthem, but the anthem is a symbolic sign of how the matters turned out, and that the collective consciousness was ready to accept this transformation.

The military character of the Syrian anthem cannot be denied. The salutation in the first phrase is directed to the "guardians of the homeland" alone, while the rest of citizens are ignored as they come in a lower rank. Additionally, the anthem strives to perpetuate a kind of class in citizenship, as there are the guards of the homeland, and the others who are being guarded by those guardians. Therefore, it establishes a rift between citizens: between civilians and military personnel who are given an advantage over the weaker party.

If a comparison is run between the Syrian and Jordanian anthems, it can be noticed that land alone is not the only difference. In addition to the inherent Bedouin values in all national anthems, the focus on land indicates a clear presence of rural values and traditions²⁶. The mantras of the Levant reveals the depth of the Syrian's attachment to the land, and the close relationship between them. For them, it is the most precious value. It should be noted that these successive poetic images in the mantras of the Levant stem from the fact that the land is an essential element in the imagination of the farmer as it crawls through the subconscious that it reveals.

However, the Syrian case is unique at various levels. Under Al-Baath Party regime, the Ba'ath anthem "O Arab youth, come on, and my procession go!" by Suleiman Al-Issa dislodged the national anthem. In the party's celebrations and official festivals, such as the eighth of March, the seventh of April, and the sixteenth of November, Al-Ba'ath anthem was the main anthem, just as it was an official anthem for the vanguards of Ba'ath Organization. It competed with the national anthem in the imagination of young children, moved it back, and made it marginal and similar to the party's competition with the state itself through monopolizing its functions, and making state organs attached to the party.

The contention point between the two anthems is that the national anthem is burdened with the legacy of the past, while the "Baath anthem" combines the chauvinism of Arab nationalism and the optimism of socialism. This combination gives hope for the Arab future: "Free Future" that will be achieved by the Arab workers, peasants, soldiers, or the toilers which is the Ba'athist equivalent of the Marxist term "Proletariat". The difference is also in the audience to which each of the two anthems address their speech. The national anthem calls for the guardians of the homeland, i.e. the soldiers, while Al-Baath anthem calls for the youth whom it sees as the driving force of history to restore the magnificent glory of the Arabs.

²⁶ To find out the differences between the rural and Bedouin values, see: Barakat. Halim, *The Contemporary Arab Society*, 6th Ed. (Beirut: center of Arab unity Studies, 1998), 85.

As above-mentioned, the Syrian case always surprises us with its uniqueness. In October War of 1973, the national anthem was not broadcast on the radio at the time. On the contrary to the custom in such cases that the national anthem is broadcast to energize and strengthen the patriotic spirit in the war confrontation, Fayrouz's song "Your foot strikes the ground fiercely," was broadcast continuously on the radio. Regardless of the justifications that were gossiped at the time that the song was the signal to launch the war, the reason for its repetition in the media is that it appears to be more popular and widespread than the national anthem, especially among those who have not had much education. The ease of song transmission and its memorization by all citizens is what facilitates its use in the media propaganda of the war. The song through its oscillation between communal bravery "Your foot strikes the ground fiercely" and individualistic one "ascending on the fireballs your pony, ascending!!" is evidence of the authority's traditional conception of heroism that sees physical strength the sole criterion that is confined between the strength of the heroes' bodies represented by the fierce strikes of their feet on the ground, and the pony ridden by the knight in the battle while ascending the fireballs, or the high tower.

With the outbreak of the Syrian revolution and the struggle to transform from a state ruled by a dictatorial regime to a democratic state, many attempts were made to find a new national anthem. The research was based on the fact that the revolution against a regime whose the current anthem constitutes one of its symbolic foundations, presupposes the search for an alternative which presents a new horizon. Therefore, using the term "Guardians of the homeland" by the "Syrian Army" particularly generated a reaction among the masses of the Syrian revolution who acknowledges the Syrian army as a militia whose only mission is to kill and displace. Many poems have been proposed to be a national anthem of which the most famous is Omar Abu Reesha's "*For the sake of glory and homelands, we live and perish*".

In Iraq, the same matter happened shortly after the US invasion in 2003 when the new regime replaced the previous anthem: "A homeland spreads wings to the horizon" with the poem "My Homeland" by Ibrahim Toukan. Although the selected poem has many rhetorical and artistic characteristics, and is burdened by many sentiments that make it a national anthem, its selection sprang from the nature of the new political regime that tried to obliterate the Arab nationalistic feeling that dominates the words of the previous anthem, and to replace it with an anthem devoid of any references to Iraq's heritage or civilization. The new anthem sounded like belonging to a country whose history lacks a cultural heritage. So, it resorted to selecting a poem that is overweighted by a noble sentiment that lacks historical roots. That made it be stuck in the space of pure subjectivity where it can be the anthem of any country and loses the characteristic that must be available in the national anthem which is the uniqueness of the text, since it includes references to the country, its history, or its major monuments and figures.

Changing the national anthems in Egypt with each new political system or with the beginning of every political trend that is contrary to the preceding one is an indication by which it can be inferred the extent of political interference in imposing the national anthems. What is surprising is that Egypt is a stable country. It is rather the only Arab country in which there is a pure national spirit that unites all its citizens. Furthermore, the sole Egyptian identity to which the Egyptians belong reinforces in principle the idea of the stability of the national anthem and the difficulty of changing with the change of political regimes. On the contrary of stable countries like Turkey that chose a national anthem that has not been changed since its foundation, but rather has become part of the national identity of the state though its writer's Islamic orientations that can be touched by the anthem's words and its mantras with the crescent, its connotations and suggest a clear Islamic horizon from which the poet sets off, contradict the nature of the secular system;

changing the Egyptian national anthem is an indication that it is a purely political means by which the ruling regime seeks to re-crystallize the concept of the homeland in line with its orientations. Thus, the insertion of the political issue into the national anthem is evident through the rhetorical weakness and the decline of poetics in almost all Egyptian national anthems. This undoubtedly springs from the political system by imposing the anthem that suits it and ignoring those people with expertise and affiliation in this field.

3. Calling for war and fighting

One of the paradoxes that makes one meditate and take a page is that the Algerian anthem is similar to the French one in its call for war. It was calling for the resistance against France which had turned into a colonial power after a revolution that adopted the "Marseilles" as an anthem calling for taking up arms to confront the internal tyranny. As noticed, the most important factor in adopting the pattern of calling for the monarchy (king) is the ruling system, but the republican ruling system alone does not elaborate the adoption of the pattern of pride in the country's history or the call for war. The French and Algerian anthems are helpful in clarifying this point. The call for fight accompanies the armed struggle of national liberation movements, revolutions, and internal or external wars. This means that knowing the historical context in which the anthem was set sheds light on the historical references it has, and on the concerns that it seeks to convey to its recipients "the citizens", just as the historical context explains such issues that touch on its rhetorical and artistic aspects.

*We swear! That even with the devastating storms brought down on us
That even with the noble and pure blood generously shed
That by the bright banners floating in the wind
On the high peaks of our proud mountains
That we stood up for life or death
Because we have decided that Algeria will live
Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!*

*We are fighters for the triumph of law
For our independence, we went to war
No one listening to our demands
We chanted them to the rhythm of the guns.
And hammered at the rate of the machine guns
Because we have decided that Algeria will live
Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!*

*O France! The time of palaver is over
We closed it like we close a book
O France! The day has come when you must be accountable.
Get ready! Here is our answer
The verdict, Our revolution will render it
Because we have decided that Algeria will live
Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!*

Our brave men will form the battalions

*Our spoils will be the ransom of our glory
And our lives those of our immortality
We will raise our flag high above our heads
Liberation Front we have sworn our loyalty to you
Because we have decided that Algeria will live
Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!*

*From the battlefields rises the call of the fatherland
Listen to him and obey!
Write it with the blood of the martyrs!
And teach it to the generations to come!
O Glory! To you we reach out our hand!
For we have decided that Algeria will live
Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!²⁷*

The Algerian anthem consists of five sections, each ending with a refrain: “*For we have decided that Algeria will live/ Be a witness! Be a witness! Be a witness!*”. Undoubtedly, the recipient feels that there is a poetic energy possessed by the poet, yet it was not expressed well. The emotional nature in calling for war has left the poem with a narrow vision, and a deficiency in dealing with issues due to the desire to provide direct denotations that make the poem lose the ability to influence the recipient. So, one of the results of preferring the denotations is that the anthem becomes a political speech intended to incite and gather supporters. If the reference to the mountains as a symbol of breakthrough, freedom and salvation is excluded, then the text, as in political speeches, resorts to intimidation, a lot of oaths and incandescent language. Nevertheless, this rhetorical assimilation was unable to create a poetic language where the text remained a political speech and a declaration of war. The text itself senses its function when it decides that this revolution is the “Decisive Speech” by borrowing the Qur'anic expression to create a kind of link between the religious text and the revolution. From our point of view, what should mainly be achieved in the national anthem is to maintain a balance between the intellectual level of the proposed issue, and the artistic level that preserves the poetic language away from direct declarativeness that is devoid of artistic and rhetorical overtones. Yet, the poet failed in this pairing, as the poetic energy was dissipated. This is evident from the absence of multiplicity of styles and the dominance of the imperatives. This absence has entailed the text's lack of expression tools that are capable of embodying general suffering and conveying a sense to the neutral recipient.

Once again, it should be emphasized that the poetic language is not intended for its own sake, but rather for its role in establishing issues in the recipient's subconscious by paralyzing his ability to think logically about what the anthem implies, and making him surrender to the magic of the text that conveys the messages that are intended to be transmitted and implanted in the recipient's mind.

The timeliness of the text / the Algerian anthem is reinforced by its repeated call: “*O France!*”. If this call is justified from an emotional and psychological point of view due to the prolonged oppression that the Algerian people have endured, and the attempts to erase its identity and Arabism, then the survival of this reference so far confines the other whose the anthem wants to plant his resistance in the collective consciousness in one direction instead

²⁷ Zakaria. Moufdi, *Diwan of Holy Flame*, (Algeria, Mofem Publications, 2007). pp:61-62. The original text includes “Be a witness” once, while the anthem repeats it trice.

of being a general speech and not specific to a state or a colonizer. The truth is that the Algerian national anthem is primarily the anthem of a national liberation movement and this is its main pitfall.

Reviewing the three anthems reveals a difference in the level of poetics that reinforces the message of the text and confirms it in the subconscious. The writer of the Syrian anthem succeeded in transforming the issue from its political level to a poetic one, but this poetics is almost absent from the other two models. This poetics is deteriorated in the Algerian anthem due to the discourse of war mobilization as well as being perished in the Jordanian anthem due to the predominance of the heavenly language that is drawn from a sacred source. That source is manifested transcendent over the mundane whose the text aspires to consecrate in the souls. Therefore, the anthem was drowned with an essential contradiction between the sacred and the mundane.

Conclusion

The concept of homeland, as shown in some national anthems, has been confused with religious and national concepts, in which political perceptions and historical narratives dominate the present realities. It refers to imaginary homelands which have not yet been established, and this contradicts the most basic principles of patriotism. The Syrian anthem expands the concept of homeland to include the historical Levant, while the Jordanian one is much more general as the homeland includes the entire Arab world. Only the Algerian anthem is unique in this context as it mentions Algeria without being confused by any other religious or national concepts...etc.

This immature understanding of the conception of homeland reveals, in some Arab anthems, the fundamental flaw that accompanies the nation state in the Arab world, and its inability to form a social contract for a civil state that would be a haven for its citizens who remained captives of the perceptions that transcend the geographical borders and restore the narratives of the one Arab state. The Achilles heel of these anthems is a broad evocation of history in contrast with the complete absence of the geographical dimension that makes the homeland unclear in the recipient's mind and weakens the presence of land in his consciousness. This issue, in our viewpoint, results in a miserable awareness in which the individual is torn between a vast imaginary homeland and a small limited geographical area where he is forced to live and to call it regretfully his homeland!!!

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