



# THE ARAB REPRESENTATION OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EURO-ARAB RELATIONS:

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## **Resumo**

Esse artigo busca auxiliar no entendimento de dois fenômenos, a percepção das sociedades árabes acerca dos valores europeus relacionados à democracia e aos direitos humanos e sua percepção sobre o modo como a União Europeia está promovendo esses valores e desenvolvendo sua diplomacia pública. Para tanto, o artigo é dividido em quatro partes. De início, a influência dos modelos políticos europeus sobre os intelectuais árabes durante a “Nahda” será discutida. Na segunda parte, a percepção árabe sobre a Europa nos períodos coloniais e pós-coloniais será apresentada. No terceiro ponto, sobre o destino dos paradigmas políticos europeus foi feito. Ao final, uma conclusão foi feita com relação a um retorno para a “Nahda”.

## **Palavras-Chave**

Sociedades árabes. Democracia e direitos humanos. Diplomacia Pública. “Nahda”

## **A REPRESENTAÇÃO ÁRABE DOS VALORES DEMOCRÁTICOS EUROPEUS E A SUA INFLUÊNCIA NAS RELAÇÕES EURO-ÁRABES**

## **Abstract**

This paper aims to help on the understanding of two phenomenon, the perception of the Arab societies of the European values related to democracy and human rights and its perception of the way European Union is promoting them and developing its own public diplomacy. For that, the paper is divided in four major parts. At first, the influence of European political models on Arab intellectuals during the “Nahda” will be discussed. In the second part, the Arab perception of Europe at the colonial and post-colonial eras will be presented. At third, a study on the fate of European political paradigms was made. At last, a conclusion has been done regarding a return to the “Nahda”.

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**Keywords:**

Arab societies. Democracy and human rights. Public Diplomacy. "Wahda"

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The drive for a research on the Euro-Arab cultural interaction and on the influence of European patterns of democracy is motivated by a serious concern about the superficial statements which is often displayed by the past studies on public opinion, some of them assuming that the European political model of democracy is ab initio rejected by the Arab societies. .

Many and in particular some so called specialists in Islamic civilization alleged there is Islamic reluctance to democracy and human rights etc., while others emphasized on the simplistic model of Clash of civilizations carried out in the nineteen nineties. In order to discard these allegations, the most adequate approach consists in getting back to the origin of the European-Arab interaction process <sup>1</sup>.

By getting back to the nineteenth' century, at a period when the Arab world had its intellectual "renaissance" (*al-Nahda*), we would be able to identify the deep roots of the Arab perception of European modern values, focusing on one of them that is "liberal democracy".

This is the first step in a presentation whose aim is to analyse the track of the Arab perception of the European political modernity, through the lenses of the Arab intellectual elite.

This theoretical paper, based on compilations and literature analysis seems to be a first step enabling us to understand two phenomenon :

the perception, by the Arab societies of the European values related to democracy and human rights

its perception of the way European union is promoting them and developing its own public diplomacy.

## 2 THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL MODELS ON ARAB INTELLECTUALS DURING THE "NAHDA" AS THE STARTING POINT OF THE ARAB PERCEPTION OF EUROPEAN VALUES

The Arab cultural awakening started in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Egypt was just starting to build up its modern state, only two decades after the end of the French occupation.

French occupation of Egypt lasted no longer than three years and brought in a lot of cultural transformation. It gave the Arab political actors the testimony that

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<sup>1</sup> The theory on Clash of Civilization developed by Samuel Huntigton triggered a wave of controversy, we summarized in a past research paper :Fouad Nohra: « **Une représentation négative de l'interculturalité : la théorie du choc des civilisations,**», in Salhia Ben Messahel : **Aux frontières de l'interculturalité**, Lille, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, (parution imminente / Février 2009), pp 139 -158.

French republican Deism and Islam were close to each other. The Egyptians discovered that something was going wrong in their political organization and in their political culture. Napoleon Bonaparte's military occupation was sure bloody, but its short timeline and its positive interaction with the Egyptian religious authorities during the first period pushed Egypt forward to a modern model of statecraft<sup>2</sup>. It was no later than two decades after the end of Napoleon's occupation of Egypt and Palestine that Muhammad Ali appointed as the Khedive of Egypt and Sudan undertook the in-depth modernization of the Egyptian state, thus encouraging a new generation of modern intellectuals to set for a new hegemonic culture in the Egyptian society<sup>3</sup>.

Rifâ'at Râfi' al-Tahtâwi was among the pioneers of the nineteenth century's Arab intellectual rebirth. As a religious preacher, he was sent to France as the Imam of the first Egyptian students' delegation in 1826, and ended up his journey with the redaction of *Takhlîs al-Ibrîz fi Talkhîs Bâriz* (Extracting Paris' Gold)<sup>4</sup>.

Many new ideas developed by the author supported Muhammad Ali's political reforms, as he advocated a modern state based on the allegiance to the Egyptian citizenship as a pillar for the political life and on equality between citizens regardless of their religious obedience. These principles were echoing the French Republican paradigm read through the lenses of a renewed Islamic thought.

Nevertheless, Rifâ'at Râfi' al-Tahtâwi's political thought was not yet the cornerstone of the democratic political doctrines in the Arab World. Mehemet Ali's regime was introducing political modernization, citizenship and an accelerated industrialization in Egypt. It represented nevertheless an authoritarian modernist experience, and the Khedive excluded from al-Azhar many Islamic top scholars too much supportive to democracy<sup>5</sup>.

As a pioneer of the modern political thought in the Arab world, he was followed by many others concerned with an new approach of political life, either by providing a new reading of the Islamic intellectual and « theological » tradition, or through new doctrinal frames rather imported from Europe.

All over the Arab provinces of the Ottoman State, many other intellectuals perpetuated this reformist initiative. Jamal Al-Din al-Afghâni<sup>6</sup> and his (disciple) Muhammad 'Abduh were concerned with reforming the religious Islamic doctrine so as to accommodate it with the requirement of modernity. So was the case of Khair al-Dîn al-Tûnisi and 'Abdul Rahmân al-Kawâkibi whose writings were focusing on how Islam and modern democracy are compatible.

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<sup>2</sup> The effect of French occupation in Egypt was just the opposite of what happened in Algeria. Concerning the latter, Michel Habart provides the graphics of the demographic decline of the Algerian population from 8 to 2 million people, and provides the description of those towns freed from most of their indigenous population. Michel Habart: *Histoire d'un Parjure*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1960 (available in Editions ANEP, Alger).

<sup>3</sup> Hasan al-Dayqa : *Dawlat Muhammad 'Ali wa al-Gharb al-Istihwâz wa al-Istiqlâl* (Muhammad 'Ali's State and the West, possession and independence), Al-Markaz al-Thaqâfi al-'Arabi, Beirut, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Rifâ'at Râfi' al-Tahtâwi : *Takhlîs al-Ibrîz fi Talkhîs Bâriz* (Extracting Paris Gold), Dâr al-Thaqâfa wa al-Irshâd al-Qawmi, Cairo, United Arab Republic, 1958 (first published in 1849)

<sup>5</sup> As a mater of fact, Cheikh Muhammad Karim was removed by the Khedive and sent to Dumiat Refaat El Sa'id : *La pensée des Lumières en Egypte*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and his family claimed he came from Asadabad in Afghanistan, though many thought he was from Asadabad in Iran. But the most relevant in our study is his presence and influence in Egypt since 1870.

The Arab philosophers of the *Nahda* (The Arab cultural and intellectual awakening) were in the same time influenced by the European modern philosophy and reacting against cultural inertia in the Arab cities. They were more or less reacting against the Ottoman regime. Most of the Arab intellectuals and philosophers criticized the Ottoman rule but not all of them were hostile to it. For instance, Al-Kawâkibi's negative perception contrasted with Al-Tûnisi's reformist stance, the latter being an Ottoman notable, a troop commander, and latter on a member of Sultan Abdul Hamid's government. Despite the divergence between those who rejected Ottoman rule and those who sought merely to reform it, one common feature between all of them was their call for a reform of the present political system.

Al-Kawâkibi started with the critique of Ottoman despotism when he came to confront it to the European political model of organization. He is assumed to have read the Arab commentaries of Rousseau and Montesquieu. He referred to the European political philosophies in addition to the European political economy and to the socialist doctrines.

Despotism is literally derived from the Arab verb "*Istabadda*" ( meaning the individual exclusive appropriation of an action). This definition, used to describe the political power gives us a similar meaning: despotism is the appropriation of political power by the ruler in who decides on his own for the fate of a whole society and is not accountable to it<sup>7</sup>.

Al-Kawâkibi's developments on despotism were determined by an East/West comparative approach. They were influenced by the European modern political philosophy's theories on political legitimacy. The author referred many times to the East/West contrast as did the European intellectuals themselves. He emphasized the negative aspects of his own "eastern" society and political system in contrast with the Western one considered as a benchmark.

Al-Kawâkibi seemed to take on his own behalf the binary East/West opposition in regard to the political behaviour:

"There are many differences between Easterners and Westerners: the former has a better character taken individually, but the Westerner has a better relation to society. For instance, the Westerners always require from their Prince, loyalty and respect of law, while in the Eastern societies it is the Sultan who orders his subjects to be loyal and obedient to him."<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the "Oriental despotism"<sup>9</sup> seems to be the reason why Arab societies are perverted and backward. Despotism leads to immorality because it forces the despot's subjects to sacrifice their own moral values in order to survive in a perverted environment. Moreover, despotism is not compatible with economic development because it brings insecurity in the economic field and is unable to provide the rules securing property and private interests.

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<sup>7</sup> Abd Al-Rahmân al-Kawâkibi : *Tabâ'î' al-Istibdâd wa-Masâri' al-Isti'bâd* (The Characteristics of Despotism and the Demises of Enslavement) Moufim, Edition, Algiers 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Abd Al-Rahmân al-Kawâkibi: *Op. Cit.*, XX

<sup>9</sup> The concept of Oriental Despotism was first developed by Hegel and paved a long way toward contemporary theory of Karl Wittfogel. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *The phenomenology of mind*. Courier Corporation, 2012. Karl August Wittfogel. *The hydraulic civilizations*. University of Chicago Press, 1956.

This global critique of the Ottoman system contrasted with the more subtle approach provided by Al-Tûnisi: the latter was rather aware of all the reforms undertaken by the Ottoman state since the middle of the nineteenth century<sup>10</sup>. Of course, the first radical reforms were carried out in Egypt and the Egyptian experience was defeated when British and Ottoman stroke back together against it in 1840. But we should also remember that Istanbul was involved in a wide scale reformist process with the many *Tanzimats* adopted since 1839<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, the Sultanate itself issued its own Ottoman constitution in 1876, introducing Ottoman citizenship with constitutional rights and obligations, limited checks and balance between legislative and executive etc. That's the reason why Al-Tûnisi's criticism was targeting the Ottoman conservative leaders rather than the Ottoman political system as a whole<sup>12</sup>.

How did the Arab philosophers refer to European political patterns?

Both Al-Kawâkibi and Al-Tûnisi referred to the "representative democracy", paradigm and their rationale consisted in finding the similarity with the original Islamic experience of Medina and of the first caliphates of Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali.

Through mobilizing historical and Islamic doctrinal resources, both of them argued the following:

the political paradigm defined by the Quranic verses is that of the "Shûra" which means "deliberative system". The Quranic verse (42;38) stipulates that all social issues should be submitted to a deliberation within the community of believers (*Amruhum Shûra Baynahum*).

The practice of the first Muslim states confirms this doctrinal source as "Shûra" (deliberation) was implemented inside the society especially when the Caliph had to set for new laws

This practice, based on Quran and Sunna, privileged the rule of law especially that this law, grounded on religious principles, but also developed by *Ijtihad* (the human effort of interpretation) and completed by the *Ijma'* (the consensus of the community) is deemed to have authority on the rulers' will, thus preventing any despotism.

This was a difficult exercise made by the Muslim scholars at a time when the dominant political culture was based on the sole principle of obedience to the ruling elite "*Awliyâ° al-Amr*"<sup>13</sup>.

That's why we suppose that this return to the origins of Islam was at this time a result of a mirror game between the Muslim intellectuals, the Arab-islamic history and the European set of values.

<sup>10</sup> In order to have an idea about the concerns for reform and modernization inside the Ottoman state, Robert Mantran: *Histoire de l'Empire ottoman* Paris, Fayard, 1989.

<sup>11</sup> The **Tanzimat**, literally meaning reform or re-organization were a set of reforms undertaken since Sultan Abdul-Majid, in order to modernize the Ottoman state.

<sup>12</sup> Khayr al-Dîn al-Tûnisi: *Aqwam al-Masâlik fi Ma'rifat Ahwâl al-Mamâlik*, (The best method to know about the situation of the Kingdoms)  al-Dâr al-Tûnisiya li al-Nashr, 1972. (first published in 1867)

<sup>13</sup> Fouad Nohra, « Pouvoir politique, droits fondamentaux et droit à la révolte : la doctrine religieuse face aux processus révolutionnaires dans le monde arabe », *La Revue des droits de l'homme* [En ligne], 6 | 2014, mis en ligne le 30 octobre 2014, consulté le 04 décembre 2014. URL: <http://revdh.revues.org/922>.

In this mirror game, the aforementioned intellectuals are supposed to have been helped by the observation of the practical experiences inside the European political modernity in order to re-discover the original Islamic political system. Therefore they dissociated the historical sultanates ruling them in an a more or less despotic way from the original democratic experience of the first Caliphates.

The genuine historical research was undertaken by Al-Tûnisi who compared the Ottoman political system with the most representative European ones (from Russia to Great Britain). In each of them, he discovered a mixture of autocracy, aristocracy and democracy, and many obstacles to the principle of equality. In his analysis he disclosed his preference for the French republican system, which was equality oriented and reflected a better democratic representation than the other European regimes.

This comparative approach was intended to establish that in each European political regime the key prerogatives were still laying in the hands of the "little few", and still those "little few" represented the people directly or indirectly or were given a higher legitimacy due to their status or to their social or cultural position. This favoured the idea that in a reformed Islamic regime, the "deliberative" prerogatives could be attributed to those identified for their wisdom, their knowledge or their political representativity, thus corresponding to the historical elite called "*Ahl al-Hal wa al-'Aqd*".

The key finding of Al-Tûnisi was this idea that the democratic reforms recommended for Tunis province, and overall for the whole Ottoman state were in the same time bringing the Arab political system close to the European waves of political reforms as well as to what was perceived as the original Islamic principles for a political organization.

Furthermore, the principle laying beyond the idea of democracy was the principle of a civil government disconnected from the idea of a God-given monarchy. The Arab philosophers concerned with the rebirth of Islamic political philosophy seemed to have read the many theories on social contract, in order to abandon the principle of a theocratic political legitimacy.

Muhammad 'Abduh, a philosopher and religious scholar at the same time, benefiting from a solid reputation within the Egyptian religious institution, later on appointed as *Mufti*<sup>14</sup>, supported the idea that the government in Islam is always a civil government, as he told that:

"In Islam there is no other religious power given on people than the power of recommendation and incitement to accomplish the right actions and to avoid the wrong ones, and the least individual among the Muslim community is invested with this power over the most influent of them,... Islam has never given (the Caliph, the Mufti or the Cheikh al-Islam) any power on the beliefs and judgements of the individual, and any power given to them is

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<sup>14</sup> The *Mufti* is the religious authority supposed to have knowledge of the religious doctrine and is habilitated to issue *Fatwa* (interpretations of religious doctrine).

only a civil power defined by the Islamic law, but which denies any (sacred) authority on the faith and believes of the individuals”<sup>15</sup>.

The secular idea spread on the aftermath of the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate. In 1925, Ali Abdul-Râziq, an Egyptian Muslim cleric, presented his theory of separation between the political system and the religious law, echoing the republican initiative of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This was another form of European influence exerted through the intermediary of Turkey, which hosted the capital of the last Muslim Caliphate.

Ali Abdul-Râziq argued that the doctrinal sources, Quran and Hadith, provided for detailed rules on marriage and inheritance, but not at all for any model of political organization. The conclusion was that the Divine source left the issue of political organization to the human civilizational course (*al-'Umrân al-Bashari*)<sup>16</sup>.

This interpretation provided the religious and doctrinal legitimacy for the secular new political, thus providing the very basis for secular liberalism and nationalism all long the twentieth century.

This influence of the European models worked through a mirror game where those Arab philosophers qualified as Islamic reformists re-discovered their original political Islamic model through the lenses of European modernity.

Another question is linked to the problematic: how did those intellectuals perceive European societies ? The statements expressed through the most famous writings disclosed a great deal of ambiguity :

A negative perception of the European societies' emancipation from traditional values was perceived as a form of civilizational decay. While observing the French way of life al-Tahtâwi who was advocating the woman's emancipation in Egyptian society wished that this would not bring the latter to what he observed in France when "sometimes men became enslaved by women". Al-Kawâkibi did the same when he said that the European « is materialist, tough in his relation to other people, greedy, with a deep desire for revenge against them, as if nothing remained in his mind from the noble feeling transmitted by Christianity which is an Oriental religion »<sup>17</sup>.

A positive perception on the same societies, because a just political system can always make people virtuous. In this sense, Muhammad 'Abduh, on his way back from France and Italy said: "I went to the West and saw Islam, but no Muslims; I got back to the East and saw Muslims, but not Islam." He explained this aphorism by giving the details of the Islamic virtues the European citizen had and the Egyptian had lost.

This ambivalent statement determined to a certain extent the Arab perception of what could be borrowed from European culture and involved the Arab intellectuals in a deep insight of their own historical values.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad 'Abduh: *Al A'mal Al-Kâmila*, (Complete Works), Volume 3, Al Mu'assasa Al-'Arabiyya li Al-Nashr, Beyrouth, 1980, pp288-289. Nevertheless Muhammad 'Abduh didn't clearly advocate a democratic regime, but only a kind of rule of law where the rights of individuals are protected.

<sup>16</sup> 'Ali 'Abdul-Râziq: *al-Islâm wa Usûl al-Hukm* (Islam and the foundation of government), Dar al-Bayrûni, 1994.

<sup>17</sup> Abd Al-Rahman al-Kawâkibi: *Op. Cit.*, p106

Islamic reformism as developed by Al-Tûnisi, Al-Kawâkibi and 'Abduh was involved in this mirror game between self perception and the perception of the Other, where the present and contingent self (qualified as decadent) is distinguished from the original self (considered as a paradigm).

### 3 A SIMPLIFIED SCHEME OF THE ARAB PERCEPTION OF EUROPE AT THE COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL ERA

Muslim reformists had a balanced relationship with Europe, grounded on a mirror game at a time when their own state was still playing in the courtyard of the influential powers. Their main concern was state reform in order to move forward to modernity.

In this sense, European powers, despite their military expansionism, and though already controlling in North Africa, served as a model of successful statecraft, and in the same time, as a place where the Arab political actors could find potential allies for their reforms.

This perception changed with the evolution of the geopolitical environment. Therefore, two stages are identified since the Arab societies were under European colonization<sup>18</sup>.

The stage of European colonization of the Arab world changed radically this balanced perception of Europe, and the new concern was national liberation through confrontation with European colonialism.

The next phase was post-colonial, and the relationship with Europe was reconsidered when the European Political Cooperation succeeded in transforming the European interaction with the Arab world in a new form of cooperation.

This is the reason why we should analyse the evolution of the Arab intellectual and philosophical perception of the European political culture, political systems and diplomacy at each of these two stages.

How did the Arab intellectuals and philosophers who lived under the European occupation perceive these three dimensions? The question is addressed through the identification of the common key claims at each period. During the late Ottoman Era the focus was on Islamic reformism, because the main concern of the mainstream Arab intellectuals was the modernization and democratization (and decentralization) of the Ottoman Islamic state. Europe was an ambivalent partner. It was perceived in the same time as a model and a threat. All depended on the context and on the position of the speaker on the geopolitical regional chessboard.

The colonial era led to a radical shift due to the new geopolitical context:

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<sup>18</sup> The periodisation doesn't follow the European standards with the two world wars at the edges. We have instead instead the beginning and the end of European occupation of the Arab societies. In order to support this assumption, we refer to Hasan Hanafi who qualifies the world wars as European wars *hasan Hanafi :Muqaddama fi 'Ilm al-Istighrâb* (Introduction to the science of occidentalism), University Institution for Publication and Distribution, Cairo, 2000.

Ottoman legitimacy disappeared next to the geographical split of the Ottoman state and to the abolition of Caliphate in 1924.

The Arab part of the Empire fell under the European colonialism and was fragmented into as many states.

The European colonialism helped to support the Arab fragmentation with a cultural dimension by encouraging if not producing micro-nationalism and minorities sectarianism<sup>19</sup>.

As a consequence, getting rid of European colonialism became the key concern expressed in the Arab philosophical and political literature. We can assume that the Arab nationalism worked therefore as a matrix<sup>20</sup>, and cross-cutting the diverse discourses of the many political trends brought us to this point. Its main concern was liberation of the Arab fatherland from European colonialism, while taking assets from inside the European modernity in order to reform the Arab society.

Arab nationalism was recent, and kept marginal until the beginning of the twentieth century. but became in less than a decade the mainstream doctrinal basis, with the Arab revolution against the Young Turks' government since 1908, and precisely since the beginning of the Arab revolution in 1915<sup>21</sup>, and this was consolidated through the struggle against European colonialism.

The Arab nationalist matrix defines the relationship with European states by correlating it to the positive objectives, which are liberation and unification of the Arab homeland.

As a matrix it was challenged by other substitute nationalisms like the Syrian nationalism and also by ideologies rejecting nationalism and promoting universal solidarities (the Marxists on one side, the Muslim Brethren on the other side). Nevertheless many Marxists endorsed Arab nationalism<sup>22</sup>.

In the following scheme we shall consider altogether the original doctrine (Arab nationalism) and the competing doctrines (pan-Islamism, Syrian nationalism and non-nationalist Arab unitarism) altogether in order to determine the variables of the Arab perception of European paradigms and actors.

If we correlate this perception with the geopolitical environment, and if we limit the reaction to each new situation to a binary option – and of course the binary options cannot not reflect the complex reality - therefore we can infer six possibilities (from S1P1 to S3P3):

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<sup>19</sup> 'Awni Farsakh: **al-°Aqaliyât fi al-Târîkh al-'Arabi** (Minorities in the Arab history), Riyad al-Rayyis li al-Tibâ'a wa al-Nashr, 1994. Fû'âd Shâhin: **al-Judhûr al-Ijtimâ'iyya wa al-Târîkhiya li al-Mas'ala al-Tâ'ifiya fi Lubnan** (The social and historical roots of the sectarian problem in Lebanon), Dâr al-Hadâtha li al-Tibâ'a wa al-Nashr, Beirut, 1980.

<sup>20</sup> The concept of matrix of a political-ideological landscape refers to a set of fundamental principles, values and beliefs standing beyond the diversity of discourses and ideologies. This is the reason why the main conflict of the nineteen fifties was between the monarchic hachemite Arab unity project and the republican socialist one.

<sup>21</sup> Zein. Zein: **The emergence of Arab nationalism: with a background study of Arab-Turkish relations in the Near East**. Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1973.

<sup>22</sup> The Marxist intellectual who moved from a strict internationalism to the Arab national paradigm were divided between those who endorsed Arab nationalism (Ra'if al-Khûri) and those who like Hassan Hamdan (Mahdi Amil) still made a clear distinction between the arab nationalism he rejected and the arab unitarism he supported. Mahdi 'Amil: **Muqaddamât Nazariya fi Dirâsat Athar al-Fikr al-Ishtirâki fi Harakat al-Taharrur al-Watani** (Theoretical prolegomena on the study of the influence of socialist thought on the national liberation movement), Dar al-Fârâbi, Beirut, 1974.

Situation 1: Arab countries are subject to European colonialism: this leads to two different positions:

Position 1: European states are ruling the Arab countries and this induces a general negative perception of an overall oppressive colonial Europe without making the distinction between the different actors inside it.

This is often the case in the philosophical nationalist discourse which as a philosophical discourse doesn't get into the empirical study of intra-European contradictions. Most of the philosophical works published by nationalists consider the European actors as a homogeneous block when they come to describe the civilizational European offensive to uproot the Arab identity<sup>23</sup>.

Position 2: European states are ruling the Arab countries and the Arab discourse considers the antagonisms inside Europe. This was more the case of empirical studies and practical political discourse.

In practice this provided the case of Rasheed Ali al-Kaylani's government in Iraq in 1941 who used to play the Axis against the ruling Britain, on the basis of the slogan "the ennemi of my ennemi is my ally"<sup>24</sup>.

In another way, this is what the Marxists did by playing the contradiction between the European governments and the European working classes. Marxists sought for an alliance with the European working class against the Imperialist projects of their own ruling class.

Situation 2: Arab countries are already emancipated from European colonialism and inserted in a regional system ruled by the bipolar conflict, in a context of United State- Israeli alliance<sup>25</sup>.

Position 1: the Arab discourse perceives Western Europe and United States as part of a homogenous political axis, and still presents a binary perception of an East/West divide.

This discourse is rather developed by philosophical and ideological writing of nationalists, "pan-Islamists" and Marxists and reduces the empirical analysis of interstate conflicts to the general scheme of common principles<sup>26</sup>.

Nevertheless, the radical « pan-Islamist » discourse considered that Western powers and the Soviet block were part of the same world<sup>27</sup>, while the Arab socialists and non-maoist Marxists<sup>28</sup> referred to the latter as an ally or a po-

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<sup>23</sup> Michel Aflaq: *Fi Sabîl al-Ba'th* (for the sake of rebirth), Bagdad 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Majid Khaddury: *Independant Iraq, A study of Iraqi politics since 1932*, Oxford University Press, 1951.

<sup>25</sup> The perception of the global political scene by the Arab intellectuals was and is still over-determined by the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nevertheless, before the mid-nineteen sixties, United States was not still perceived as the strategic ally of Israeli state. For a detailed analysis on this question Fouad Nohra: *Stratégies américaines pour le Moyen-Orient*, Al Bouraq, 1999

<sup>26</sup> That is the reason why the sociological analysis and the political action move easily out of those philosophical schemes in order to look into the empirical complexity of intra-European divergences and conflicts.

<sup>27</sup> Among the philosophical writing highlighting the similarities between the Western and the Soviet blocks, Sayyid Qutb: *Al-'Adala al-Ijtima'iyya fi al-Islam* (Social justice in Islam), Dar al-Shurûq, 1995.

<sup>28</sup> In the Maoist theory since the early sixties, the revolutionary movements should strike equally against US and Soviet imperialism.

tential ally, by using the word “imperialism” to qualify the whole US-Western European alliance<sup>29</sup>.

Position 2: the Arab discourse does perceive the gap between United States and European diplomacy<sup>30</sup>, and therefore rejects the binary perception of an East/West cleavage and identifies the European diplomacy as a third actor. It expects from this European independent actor one of those possible attitudes: neutrality,,mediation, positive partnership<sup>31</sup>.

As Arab nationalism considers that the struggle ends up whenever the Arab national goals of liberation and unity are performed; therefore there are not essential historical antagonists but only cyclical or temporary antagonists. In this case, the relationship with Europe is expected to be at least neutral, and in many cases positive, once the colonial relation has been ended.

European common diplomacy since 1974 started to get its specific identity that made it distinct from United States', and especially when next to the first oil shock the European response consisted in establishing the Euro-Arab dialogue<sup>32</sup> while the US administration was planning for military control over the Gulf and more than hinting the possibility of use of force.<sup>33</sup>

Situation 3 : Arab independent countries are subject to domestic violent conflicts. And we assume the schematic binary opposition between the identity centred actors who give priority to sovereignty issues and domestic change centred actors who admit a foreign interference in order to protect their rights.

Position 1 : The identity centred actors reject the European interference and consider it as a negative factor in the domestic conflict.

Position 2 : the change centered actors seek for European support whether political, economic or cultural in order to resolve the domestic crisis, or in order to challenge the domestic antagonist.

The following simplistic scheme displays the six possibilities from S1P1 (situation 1 Position 1) to S3P2.

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<sup>29</sup> The concept of imperialism was first used by the Marxist theory in the field of political discourse and practice, and was latter extended to the Arab socialist discourse in the sixties.

<sup>30</sup> During the European colonial era, and during the battles for independence, United States were rather perceived as a potential ally. Pierre Moussa: **Les Etats-Unis et les nations prolétaires**, Seuil, Paris, 1965. And for what concerns the Egyptian hesitation between alliance with the United States and alliance with the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Republican era: Lenczowski, George. **American presidents and the Middle East**. Duke University Press, 1990.

<sup>31</sup> These are general concepts referring to various situations. A typical situation when we talk about mediation is the Arab-Israeli conflict, when the European partners were since the middle of the nineteen seventies perceived as a possible mediator while United States were peerceived (except by latter Sadat's diplomacy) as fully involved in the conflict. Positive partnership was perceived by the socialist Arab political actors, as they were opportunities for the Arab states to develop more balanced economic partnerships than with the US multinational companies.

<sup>32</sup> For what concerns the evolution of Euro-Arab dialogue, many references can help, the most detailed being Bichara Khader: **L'Europe et le monde arabe, cousins, voisins**, Publisud, Paris, 1992. Another paper written at this time already highlighted the problems and obstacles Bernard Corbineau: **Le Dialogue Euro-Arabe, instance du nouvel ordre international (1973-78)**, Revue Française de Science Politique, n°3, 1980 pp 560-598.

<sup>33</sup> R.K. Ramazani: **International Straights of the World: the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz**, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, 1979

Situations/positions	Arab perceptions of European political actors	
	P1	P2
S1: European Colonization	Negative: East/West confrontation – European main target	Negative – displaying European/European divergences
S2: European colonization terminated	Negative: East/West confrontation – European as US allied	Positive – seeking for Euro-Arab cooperation
S3: Arab independence + domestic conflicts	Negative: rejection of foreign interference	Positive – trapping Europe into domestic conflicts

The optimal combination for the Euro-Arab relations was S2P2 which was correlated to the rise of a specific European Diplomacy, through the European Political Cooperation (EPC). And we choose to focus on this limited timeframe of the 1973-1980 period to illustrate a typical S2P2 case.

The rise of the EPC enabled this political counterpart of EEC to build up the frame for an European consensus in foreign policy, and this consensus was influenced by the French Gaullist independent foreign policy as a drive, resulting into an European divergence with the US Middle Eastern policy<sup>34</sup>.

The two key issues for this common foreign policy regarding the Arab world were the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Euro-Arab dialogue.

Concerning the first issue, EPC helped throughout the nineteen seventies to bridge the gap between two edge-sided countries, Netherland and France: in 1967, while the Dutch government provided a full diplomatic support to Israel, the French government supported the Arab claim for an Israeli withdrawal from recently occupied territories. At this time France was almost the only EEC country to take her distances with the US policy of support to Israel. Six years later, in 1973, the same diplomatic divide reappeared inside EEC, but the other four founding members of the EEC members took their distance with the Dutch position, and this until the EPC mechanisms brought the EPC/EEC member into a consensus whereby the rights of the Palestinian people could be recognized, and we got the Venice declaration<sup>35</sup>.

The second key was the Euro-Arab dialogue, helping to bring a change in the perception by each block of the other one. The Arab oil embargo as a mean to retaliate against foreign military and diplomatic support to the Israeli expansion hurt United States in addition to one of the six EEC/EPC member states (Netherland). While the

<sup>34</sup> In a former research, we established the causality of French diplomacy in moving the European Political Cooperation out of an alignment on the US Middle Eastern diplomacy Fouad Nohra, Muhammad Mustafa Kamal: *Sun' al-Qarâr fi al-Ittihâd al-Urubbi wa al-'Ilâqât al-'Arabiya al-Urubbiya* (Decision making process in the European Union and the Euro-Arab relationship», Center for Arab Unity Studv. Beirut. 2001.

<sup>35</sup> David John Allen. and Alfred Piipers. eds. *European foreign policy-making and the Arab-Israeli conflict*. Vol. 10. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1984.

former responded both by supporting a “consumers’ cartel”, the latter was involved in an EPC dynamics moving toward dialogue with the Arab states. The Euro-Arab dialogue was a new form of recognition by the European partner that they could negotiate with the Arab world as such and this was an implied recognition of the Arab identity of their interlocutor.

On the Arab side, the growing perception of European Community at this stage, are summarized as follows:

Europe is identified with European Community: in the political and intellectual discourse, there is a semantic confusion between them.

Europe’s goals are perceived as being mainly economic, especially because in the Euro-Arab dialogue, EEC partner emphasized on trade partnership with the Arab countries. This helped to weaken the image widespread during the colonial era of an European civilizational offensive aiming at dispossessing the Arabs from their own identity.

EEC then EU is moreover expected to be more than a trade partner. Many sought for a EEC/EU role of mediator in regional conflicts, and as an alternative partner without or with limited hegemonic claims. This perception is strengthened by the relevance of common EPC then EU positions, and by the consensual mechanism of decision making.

This period of emergence of EPC, left a long lasting footprint in the the Arab perception of what European Union could be, despite the rise of the inter-Arab diplomatic divide since the late seventies, and the paralysis of common Arab institutional mechanisms (the League of Arab States)

#### 4 THE FATE OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARADIGMS AND THE POST-MODERNIST INVERTED MIRROR GAME

A political antagonism doesn’t prevent from cultural influence, and this explains why European political models and philosophical frames were still influential in the Arab world.

This means that while the Arab peoples were struggling against European colonialism, the Arab political thought still borrowed concepts and paradigms from the European political thought and practice.

Within the Arab national matrix, many political paradigms were competing, but sometime mixed during the first half of the Twentieth century:

The traditional paradigm relied on the monarchic families’ legitimacy and on the traditional ruling class, but lacked all the resources to engineer the new statecraft<sup>36</sup>.

The search for modernity was represented by two opposite trends:

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<sup>36</sup> In this sense, the constitutional frame able to legitimate the Hachemite ruling family was nothing else than the scheme of a constitutional monarchy, and the easiest shortcut was obviously the British reference to legitimate the idea of creating a monarchy.

The creation of European-like representative democracies though with many restrictions.

The creation of a modern state through the paradigm of an authoritarian modernization.

The latter paradigm consisted in modernization through an authoritarian top-down approach. Whenever implemented (Iraq 1941, Syria 1949, Egypt 1952, Tunisia 1956, Iraq 1958, Yemen 1974 etc..) it worked on the basis of the following assumptions<sup>37</sup>:

the Arab society needs to be modernized

The social structure is reluctant to modernization

The society is modernized by a top-down authoritarian state policy

This paradigm was supposed to be influenced by the Turkish republican model as it seems that Rachid Ali Al-Kaylani, Husni Al-Za'îm and 'Abdulkarim Qâsim, all of them being senior military officers and relying on the armed forces to access to premiership, were inspired by this model, which on his turn borrowed its main principles and mechanisms from the experience of the European modern state<sup>38</sup>.

In this case, the modern European state is still a benchmark, but this time its authoritarian face is emphasized. This phenomenon displays the double edge of the modern statecraft: the liberal democratic edge and the authoritarian hierarchic edge; European history in the nineteen thirties gives a lot of evidence of how we can shift from one edge to another<sup>39</sup>.

In the authoritarian-modernist experience both edges met in the same political system which paradoxically used the authoritarian paradigm in order to develop the modern set of values<sup>40</sup>.

This paradigm that is nevertheless derived from European modernity is obviously diverging to a great extent with the founding political paradigm of West European post World War II organizations<sup>41</sup>.

This human rights based value system was at the beginning carried by the Council of Europe at a time when the European community was mainly trade oriented. It took more than half a century to the latter to integrate the objectives and mech-

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<sup>37</sup> Among the intellectuals who justified the key role of the military institution in the political change Anouar Abdel-Malek.. *La dialectique sociale*. Éditions du Seuil. 1972. Instead. Anouar Abdel-Malek tried to find the historical roots of the political system in the Egyptian society and in the social conflicts taking place in contemporary Egypt.

<sup>38</sup> Kais Jewad: *Du Califat au coup d'Etat*, Alpha Beta, Paris, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Most of the post-modern critics of the modern states emphasized this double edge political system with democracy and human rights on one side and the repressive capacity on the other side. Nietzsche's aphorism «the state is the coldest of the cold monsters» can easily summarize the theories of the modern oppressive state.

<sup>40</sup> The thesis of the state driven coercive modernization is sometime used in European sociology (Emile Durkheim: *Education et sociologie*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1968), but also in the *reductio ad absurdum* induced by more empirical studies on Middle Eastern politics (Ghassan Salamé (Dir.): *Démocraties sans démocrates, Politiques d'ouverture dans le monde arabe et islamique*, Fayard, Paris, 1994).

<sup>41</sup> The word «European post-World War II organizations» is less ambiguous because the economic dimension (unified market) and the political dimension (human rights protection) were promoted by two different European organizations, the EEC on one hand and the Council of Europe on the other hand.

anisms of the former through the implementation of the European union charter of fundamental rights.

The paradox of the Arab modernity is that many of the representative political doctrines were influenced by paradigms of European modernity while being in contradiction with the value set of European post World War II organizations and therefore of European Union.

Among the political paradigms, the so called paradigm of “popular democracy” was overwhelming inside the Arab landscape of the nineteen sixties and of the nineteen seventies (from Algeria to Iraq). Its very basis was the Marxist theory of class struggle whereby political legitimacy was relying on its class identity, and the “authentic democracy” reflecting the power of the working people’s alliance represented by the revolutionary vanguard. This perception derived from the evolution of the Marxist theory adapted to the Arab nationalist doctrine was endorsed by the later Ba’th’s declaration (1966) as well as by the Egyptian National Charter (1964) and by the National Liberation Front in Algeria<sup>42</sup>.

Was this an European paradigm, as it became closer to the Soviet ideological paradigms even if Arab socialism was very different from the soviet party system? Whatever the answer to this question could be, it was obviously the Soviet Union and not the European post World War II organizations that served as a benchmark for political regimes<sup>43</sup>.

This didn’t prevent Arab socialist regimes to get closer to the EPC/EEC countries, and one of the cases illustrating this fact is the strengthening French-Iraqi diplomatic and economic relationship since 1974<sup>44</sup>. The Arab socialist perception of European union changed and broke off with the former philosophical discourse since the establishment of the Euro-Arab dialogue, and since European common diplomacy diverged from the US-Israeli axis. If we use Nye’s typology, EPC diplomacy emphasized Economic power and soft power, and avoided hard power<sup>45</sup>.

With the crisis of Arab socialism, two ideologies expanded among many others: revolutionary Marxism whose leaders and intellectuals blamed the fake socialism of the Arab nationalists and the so called “Islamists”, both aiming to reshape the perception of Europe among the public opinion. Both of them were opposed to Western political and cultural influence, whether American or European.

Here we reach a paradox, with the Iranian revolution, despite Iran being outside the Arab world. Nevertheless, its revolution influenced the Arab neighbourhood to a great extend. Among the most famous intellectuals close to it, we have Ali Shariati whose works were based on the synthesis of religious political doctrine and theory

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<sup>42</sup> The concept of popular democracy grew up from the Soviet experience, where the peasant-workers’ alliance became the ground for any legitimate political power, while the previous Marxist theories didn’t mention democracy but revolutionary transition to a final stage where the state would disappear. The Arab socialist borrowed the concepts of class representation and vanguard political party ruling the country, but they extended the class alliance to “all the working people”.

<sup>43</sup> In a past contribution we reached the conclusion that Marxist philosophy moved eastward and was since Leninism subject of an Easternization process. Fouad Nohra: “*Ishkâliyat al-Nahda al-Arabiya al-Jadida*” (Problematic of the new Arab awakening). *al-Tarîq*. Beirut. mav-June 1995.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Saint-Prot. Charles. *La France et le renouveau arabe: de Charles de Gaulle à Valéry Giscard d’Estain*. Éd. Copernic. 1980.

<sup>45</sup> Joseph Nye: *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public Affairs, 2004.

of class struggle in addition to Baqir al-Sadr who was an Iraqi philosopher and religious Muslim Shi'i cleric who argued that an Islamic economy should overcome capitalism and socialism in order to focus on the human dimension<sup>46</sup>.

The paradox provided from this junction of Western influenced post-modernist philosophy rejecting all the conceptual frames of liberal democracy with an Islamic revolutionary doctrine using a revolutionary and even "third worldist" rhetoric. As Islamic values are not *per se* incompatible with European political values, and the political theories of the earlier Arab modern philosopher is an evidence of it, the "revolutionary Islamic thought" hostile to the contemporary European set of values was also echoing the radical post-modern European violent criticism of European modernity.

European post-modernism's roots stemmed from the core of the modern era, with the development of the Marxism, Nietzscheism and psychoanalysis, which instigated the doubt on the fundamentals of modern rationalism, modern individualism and liberal democracy, but those philosophical doctrine didn't exhaust the list of those very critical toward these values.

Among the so called anti-humanists, Michel Foucault argued that the structures of the modern state of law are just a set of social mechanisms of controls that gives us the fiction of autonomous and responsible individuals. Foucault's judgement met with the dynamics of the Islamic revolution in Iran, that he perceived as a revolution against the oppressive modernity<sup>47</sup>.

A steadier alliance based on common concepts and doctrinal beliefs put together the radical Marxist anti-imperialist in the Arab world with the radical revolutionary Marxist in Europe. Both were very critical toward the European diplomacies toward the "Third world" and therefore toward the Arab world. European common diplomacy was perceived as reflecting an unbalanced system where the Core as a whole (the dominant countries) exploited and dominated Periphery (the so called third world countries)<sup>48</sup>. This theory didn't get into the many details in order to identify which country did what, but perceived a cohesive "imperialist block" whose core was United States. Economic partnerships between European Community (then European Union) and the Arab world was perceived as part of this exploitation process.

This approach misses an appropriate knowledge of the dynamic inside the EC/EU itself. As it expanded it became more and more heterogeneous. As a matter of fact, two countries were known for their support for Arab liberation, and therefore for the Palestinian cause: Ireland and Greece. Both perceived themselves as peripheral colonized societies. Ireland because of the history of British colonialism, and Greece because the Greek left and PASOK government believed their own country was for a

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<sup>46</sup> Bâqir al-Sadr: *Iqtisâduna* (Our Economy), Maktab al-I'lâm al-Islami, 1996. Ali Shari'ati: *Man and Islam*, University of Mashad Press, 1982

<sup>47</sup> Michel Foucault: *Dits et écrits II*, 1976-88, Gallimard, Paris, 1988.

<sup>48</sup> Many common works and researches gathering Samir Amin (from Egypt) with Andre Gunder Frank (German) and Giovanni Arrighi (Italian) and Immanuel Wallerstein (American) were published during the nineteen eighties Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, André Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein: *La crise quelle crise?*, La Découverte, Paris, 1982. Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, André Gunder Frank, Immanuel Wallerstein: *Le grand tumulte*, La Découverte, Paris, 1990

long time a economic and political dominion of the core Western states (UK, then USA)<sup>49</sup>.

According to the culturalists, Marxist theory was not really breaking off with European cultural patterns<sup>50</sup>. That is the reason why some European sociologists called for an alternative to the « Westernization of the World»<sup>51</sup>. This idea was at the same time echoing to and echoed by the identity-centred approach in the Arab world in which many stressed the need to restore the Arab civilizational patterns relegated by colonialism.

Another philosophical project designed to face cultural alienation was Hassan Hanafi's project of "Occidental Studies" or "Occidentalism" (*Istighrâb* or *'Ilm al-Istighrâb*), represented the symmetrical counterpart of the European "Orientalism". The Arab self, Instead of being determined by the Western perception, should have his own knowledge of the Western civilizational patterns.

The Arab project of "Occidentalism" or "Occidental sciences" was made to give them the opportunity to be the subject of a knowledge process after they have been for a long time the object of European social sciences<sup>52</sup>.

This "Occidentalism" paved the way for the same criticism of modernity. Instead of advocating post-modernity, it presented it as a process of disintegration for most of the basic principles of modernity (Rationality, individuality, democracy etc...).

« Occidentalism » defines itself as a scientific approach, and its aim is to analyse the genesis and context of the European philosophies, doctrines and cultures. This enables the Arab scholar to understand them better instead of spreading stereotypes or instead of just repeating what he was taught on Europe about European culture.

Among the Arab scholars, the "Occidentalists" are those who have seriously identified the problematic of post-modernity, and the way Europe has overthrown its own modernity matrix through the post-modernist criticism during the second half of the twentieth century.

This enables us to understand that another mirror game replaced the one described above for the nineteenth century:

in the *Nahda* mirror game, the European modernity was discovered as a mirror to the original Islamic model the Arabs have lost throughout their history.

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<sup>49</sup> As for Greece, one of our past studies on European union foreign policy concluded that the Greek socialist political actor perceived their own country as an exploited and dominated periphery, and this argument helped to define an overtly pro-Arab and pro-socialist foreign policy under Andreas Papandreou's premiership. Fouad Nohra, Muhammad Mustafa Kamal: **Sun' al-Qarâr fi al-Ittihâd al-Urubbi wa al-'Ilâqât al-'Arabiyya al-Urubbiya** (Decision making process in European Union and the Euro-Arab relations). Markaz Dirâsât al-Wihda al-'Arabivva. Beirut. 2001. Stavros Meimaridis.: **La politique étrangère grecque face au conflit israélo-arabe (1947-1990), Thèse de doctorat présentée à l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris, 1993.**

<sup>50</sup> Serge Latouche added to the three M who colonized the South (Military, Missionaries, Merchants) a fourth M (the Marxist) Serge Latouche: **Faut-il refuser le développement?**, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1986

<sup>51</sup> Serge Latouche: **L'Occidentalisation du monde**, La Découverte, Paris 1988.

<sup>52</sup> Hassan Hanafi: **Muqaddama ila 'Ilm al-Istighrâb** (Introduction to the science of Occidentalism), al-Dâr al-Fanniya, Cairo, 1991.

In the contemporary Post-modern mirror game, the rejection of European modernity by the Arab radical revolutionary (whether Marxists of "Islamists") echoed a similar attitude among the European post-modernist revolutionaries.

But as in Europe, post-modernism is nowadays replaced by a new combination of assertive modernity and National-Christian revivalism, the gap between Europe and the Arab world is now widening in the sense that the Arab intellectual who have in the past echoed the European post-modernists have now lost their post-modernist and revolutionary European counterpart... In a few words there is always a time when one side of the mirror is broken.

## 5 THE NEW LIBERAL CONSENSUS : BACK TO THE INITIAL *NAHDA* MIRROR GAME

The Euro-Arab mirror game is also played at the level of the Liberal doctrines here and there. The rise of post-modernity in the West and of radical revolutionary doctrines in the Arab world overshadowed for a while the liberal doctrines developed since the Nahda. A crucial moment would have been the lost opportunity for an Euro-Arab consensus, and it can be called the "Fukuyama moment"<sup>53</sup>, means the time when the political actors and intellectuals of both sides believed that the return to the liberal democracy as it is defined in Western Europe was the condition for any positive transition in the other parts of the World.

On the European side, the revisit of modernity's core values enabled a move back from the post-modern relativism to the universalist rationalism. And this went altogether with an assertive support of the paradigm of liberal democracy, which many European and American think tank defined as the only possible paradigm of democracy<sup>54</sup>.

On the Arab side, the task was not to revisit a liberal democracy they couldn't really experience, except for brief periods in some few country (Syria during the nineteen forties and the nineteen fifties<sup>55</sup>), but to determine the historical and political conditions for a liberal democratic transition.

Therefore, many liberal intellectual focused on the analysis of the obstacles to the democratic change rather than on democracy itself. They targeted the Arab authoritarian state, tried to understand how it works and especially how it did survive the third wave of democracy. And the repeated question asked by both Arab and European scholars was : why is the Arab world still reluctant to democratic transition?

An answer to these questions relied on theories on oppressive state that is still resisting to change, with many theoretical models we only present three of them :

The theory of the rentier state : A state based on a non-productive system:  
the theory of authoritarian rentier state explained the mechanism of author-

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<sup>53</sup> A reference to Francis Fukuyama's theory expecting the definite victory of liberalism over

<sup>54</sup> Adam Przeworski: **Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990**. Vol. 3. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>55</sup> This was the case despite frequent *coup d'Etat*, the last one initiated by Adib Shayshikli bringing back the civil rule and liberal democracy.

itarian state consolidation through the use of the oil rent, and how the oil rent inverted the relationship between the citizen and the government<sup>56</sup>.

The theory of the state/civil society schizophrenia : A state working as an autonomous environment, with its elites, its economy, its own culture, acting like an alien for the civil society which is only the exploited-oppressed side of the relation<sup>57</sup>.

The theory of neopatrimonial state whose resources are privatized and shared by ruling families<sup>58</sup>.

The European mechanisms of liberal democracy are here working as positive terms of comparison, without working as models the Arab people should imitate. In the same time, the key values of human rights protection are recognized as universal.

This common belief is deemed to be the ground for a possible consensus on human rights and on the founding principles of liberal democracy between European and Arab scholars whatever the practical experiences of political regimes on the ground. The return of the liberal thought was contemporary to the crucial shift in the EU diplomacy based on the “political conditionality”, according to which the economic aid is linked to the respect by the aid recipient of human rights and democratic standards. This seemed to work more or less with sub-Saharan Africa. But why didn't it work with the Arab world?

In order to understand the situation, let's consider the “Algerian paradox” where the full implementation of the democratic mechanisms in 1989 gave a landslide victory to the Islamic Salvation Front whose ideology was radically hostile to the very basis of liberal democracy, and where the protection of the key values of modernity went through the military return to power, at least for a while, in 1992.

As a consequence, the liberals discussed about the paradox of a “democracy without democrats”<sup>59</sup>, meaning that the social conditions for a safe and steady democratic system are still absent, thus trapping them into the following paradox: supporting the authoritarian models of government in order to protect the values of Arab modernity.

This was the ultimate trap for the EU principle of democratic conditionality, and this is the explanation why these crises were avoided by the EU actors who just managed to get involved into a realpolitik disregarding the guiding principle. But this couldn't work and the Arab intellectuals highlighted its contradictions: realpolitik when democracy was risky was combined with democratic conditionality when the regimes were unfriendly (Sudan, Syria, Iraq).

The other issue is that we should understand the way EU institutions work when it comes to the defence of democratic and human rights values. Here the visibility is an essential matter, and many divergences appear when the European Par-

<sup>56</sup> Hassan Khaldûn al-Naqîb: *Al-Dawla al-Tasallutiya fi al-Mashriq al-'Arabi* (The Despotic state in the Arab Mashriq), Markaz Dirâsât al-Wihda al-'Arabiya, Beirut, 1989.

<sup>57</sup> Burhan Ghaliun: *Al-Dawla Dud al-'Umma* (The state against the nation), Markaz Dirâsât al-Wihda al-'Arabiya, Beirut, 1994.

<sup>58</sup> As a later theory of neopatrimonialism in the Arab world Adib Ni'mi: *Al-Dawla al-Ghanâ'imiya wa al-Rabî' al-'Arabi*, (The patrimonial state and the Arab spring), Dâr al-Farâbi, Beirut, 2014.

<sup>59</sup> Ghassan Salamé (Dir.): *Op. Cit.*

liament takes a position that is not endorsed by the Council, or vice-versa, or when a consensus between member states is out of reach.

Another consequence of the paradox between supporting a democratization freezing modernization and supporting an authoritarian modernization was that many liberal intellectuals moved to another field than politics: the re-interpretation of the religious doctrine in order to confront the closed dogmatic interpretation with new enlightened doctrines<sup>60</sup>.

The crucial opportunity for reaching an European-Arab consensus is undeniably the “Arab spring”. We will call it “Tahrir Square consensus”<sup>61</sup>. This consensus gathered the main Arab political doctrines (liberal, Marxist, nationalist and “Islamist”) who agreed on democratic mechanisms as a matrix for any political system. This was supposed to bridge the gap between the European post-WWII organisations’ values (ie liberal democracy) and the Arab new elite and to consolidate a new universal “democratic consensus”<sup>62</sup>.

Another positive asset for the consolidation of the common liberal model is that the European Neighbourhood policy includes the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) which efficiency is more visible in a new-born democracy<sup>63</sup>.

Many factors led to the hypothesis that this opportunity is lost again as the move from democratic protest to crisis, civil war and humanitarian disaster induced many political dilemmas among the European actors. All of them resulted from the S3P2 case, where the EU actor is trapped in a domestic Arab conflict by Arab friendly oppositional political actors, but are about to lose their credibility in the eye of the Arab identity centred political actors. That is the reason why EU actors’ initiative is mainly about dilemmas :

In the case of Egypt: human rights claims or state stability and economic recovery<sup>64</sup>?

In the case of Libya: interfering in state building or caring only about the European common borders and the protection of oil facilities?

The rise of the conservative discourse focusing on protecting Christian minorities (while more than 90% of victims of terrorism are not), and on welcoming only Christian refugees as it was told by four EU governments (true out of twenty eight and criticized by the European Commission).

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<sup>60</sup> This was the main objective of Mohamed Arkoun, Muhammad ‘Âbid al-Jâbiri, Abdallah Laroui and many others working on the reinterpretation of the Islamic heritage, in order to downplay the rising literalist tradition.

<sup>61</sup> We should make a distinction between the political moment of “Tahrir Square” which was short lived and its ideological sense.

<sup>62</sup> In our recent papers, we discovered that one key condition for the democratic change was that the most representative oppositional actors agreed on democracy as a fundamental matrix for every political regime and not only as a mean to reach government. Fouad Nohra : “Jordanie, Egypte, Yémen, l’ingénierie constitutionnelle du pouvoir face aux dynamiques oppositionnelles” (Jordan, Egypt, Yemen: constitutional engineering and oppositional dynamics), **Enjeux Diplomatiques et Stratégiques**, Economica, Paris 2010, pp130-146

<sup>63</sup> Elena Lazarou, Maria Gianniou, Gerasimos Tsourapas: “The limits of norms promotion, the EU in Egypt and Israel/Palestine”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol15, n°2, 2013, pp171-193.

<sup>64</sup> Beata Przybylska: “The political dimension of the European Union –Egypt relations after 2012, between necessity and obligation” in Ana Potyrata, Beata Przybylska, Sebastian Wocjichowski: **The Relations between European Union and Egypt after 2011, Determinants, Areas of Cooperation and Prospects**, Logos Verlag Berlin, 2015.

Another factor is now changing the sense of history: the democratic standards are now questioned inside the European union by the rising combination of nationalism and Christian revivalism. This new political landscape and yet the Hungarian experience leads us to the remake of the Algerian paradox: the “demos” is enabled to reject the standards of liberal democracy, this time in favour of a nationalist- religious oriented authoritarianism.

This change in paradigm has not yet produced all its effects inside the Arab intellectual landscape, but its very probable effect would be again a new discredit to the liberal paradigm. If deeply rooted inside the societies, this change can bring three crucial elements that can be easily perceived on the Arab side: security at the expense of liberty, identity-centered islamophobia and a foreign policy focusing mainly on non-Muslim, non-Arab minorities<sup>65</sup>. Nowadays, this move is reaching many of the member states, but not yet the EU institutions. At least, the dichotomy between an EU human rights centred initiative and the identity-centered policies of an increasing number of member states will be more and more visible.

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