State-building Process from the View of Nationalism[1]: A Case Study on Postcolonial Arab Countries

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Abstract: *The method of state-building is based on particular ideologies and political philosophies, which means that different countries have different concepts of state-building. Among these concepts, nationalism is most closely related to state-building and plays an important part in the shaping of political frameworks especially in the Third World, including Arab countries. This article contends that nationalism in the postcolonial Arab countries demands in state-building strong populism, radical deinstitutionalization, direct democracy and charismatic leadership, but finally is converted to authoritarianism because of the unsustainability of these demands, which are both the logical result of self evolvement of nationalism and the inner quest of social development of Arab countries. As time goes by, whether Arab countries tend to accept totalitarian or democracy in state-building depends on the combination of nationalism with certain ideologies in the future. Among them, only civic nationalism can keep the political process in the right direction.*
Key Words: *Arab Countries; Nationalism; Postcolonial Arab countries; Social development; State-building*

"State-building", defined in *Politics of Development*, is a process in which the state establishes political authority, penetrates hierarchically the entire social existence with state power and builds a modern political system within the state.[3] During the process of building a modern state, state-building, which, regardless of its approach, must be based on a particular ideology or political philosophy as the guideline for actions, is a major problem faced by the Third World countries. Therefore, different counties with different political ideologies will have different

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[1] State-building in this paper mainly refers to the concept in an institutional sense. The content is derived from the author's doctoral dissertation.

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[3] Korean scholar Su-Hoon Lee thinks that "state-building refers to state strengthening its power over society or upgrading its social organizing power." In his view, to strengthen state power and to upgrade state ability are two concepts that can replace each other. Tilly, however, equals state-building to the process of eradicating or reducing the potential or real competing power focus. As for the content of state-building, Su-Hoon Lee categorizes it into three aspects: extraction, coercion and incorporation. Su-Hoon Lee, *State-Building In Contemporary Third World* (Boulder: Westview press, Kyungnam University Press, 1988), pp.25-31. The famous Chinese scholar Qiang Lee holds a similar view. He combined standpoints of Max Weber, Norbert Elias and Mancur Olson, and sorted basic features of modern state into three aspects: legal right of monopoly violence application, monopoly of taxation, supply of the public goods for its citizens. Qiang Lee, *Modern State-Building under Post-Totalitarian Regime, Strategy and Management*, Vol. 6, 2001, pp.78-79.

processes as well as results of state-building, which is particularly true in its early stage. Among all the possible alternatives of ideology, nationalism bears the closest relations with state-building. Especially in the Third World countries, nationalism is usually the major shaping force to the political development framework. Then how does nationalism affect the process of state-building? And what will be its outcome? This article deeply explores these questions with a case study of Arab countries[4] which won national independence in the 1950s and the 1960s.

I. State-building from the View of Nationalism

If we can define in the view of political science the goal of state-building as a question of "who gets what", then the process of state-building will be a question of "how to get it". Since state-building is a process of state power consolidation and top-down penetration, it inevitably involves "rule by law" and "rule by morals", two different ways of governance concepts and approaches. This article will mainly focus on the question of "rule by morals" in the Arab world due to its topic, which is how nationalism as a concept will react in the process of state-building.[5]

In the postcolonial era, state-building has become an inevitable choice for the new regimes in the Arab countries.[6] The launching of land reform bills in the 1950s was just a prelude of Middle East countries' attempts to fully control their economic system, which was accomplished along the implementation of a series of socialist reforms. Egypt undertook nationalization of its industrial and banking sector in 1961, while Syria and Iraq took the same action in 1965 in succession. Some of these reforms have led to a redistribution of wealth and rediscovery of social justice. What is more important is that through the redistribution of social resources the entire old wealthy class has often been brought into decadence. Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb's description on how the newly-established state powers in the Arab countries expanded themselves provides an inspiring framework for this article's analysis and discussion, but what is different from Hasan al-Naqeeb's research is that this article mainly deals with the influence that Arab nationalism imposed on state-building. My observation of this research is

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[4] The Arab countries in this paper mainly refer to the secularized countries in the Arab world, especially Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Libya.

[5] Because "rule by morals" and "rule by law" are two senses that have an interactive relation, to put nationalism as the focus of analysis will express itself possibly in a form of physical power eventually.

[6] Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb who has specialized in Middle East issues has described for us the general routine of state power expansion: first, these new regimes (mostly military ones) try to control the state right after their establishment. Second, they destroy all forms of organizations that can exercise power (such as political parties and institutions). Third, they will expand their power among the public (to control labor unions or other professional organizations). Fourth, which is the last step, they realize that effective monopoly of power will include things that are in the outside governmental control, namely social rights like land ownership, capital and wealth.

Khaldoun Hasan al-Naqeeb, "Social Origins of the Authoritarian State in the Arab East", in Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides (Eds.), *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture*, Board of Regents of the State of Florida, 1991, pp.64-65.

that nationalism at the stage of striving for national liberation, due to its clear-cut attitude of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, gained great domestic support from the public, and therefore became the most influential political ideology at the moment. Later after the establishment of new country, this kind of nationalism logically reached a state level of existence and rendered the building of the political system in the newly-founded country as distinctively characteristic.

II. The Influence on the State-building Process Imposed by Nationalism

Arab countries' new nationalistic sentiments have posed major influences on the building of a national political system, which can be illustrated in the follow aspects:

A). Strong Inclination of Populism
The development and growth of Arab countries' national movements were directly based on the support of the people from the low-middle class. In Arab countries, social strata had been underdeveloped and undernourished compared to the Western developed countries due to the backwardness in the social and economic sector. To be specific, no political class with a clear political program and interest origin had evolved. Under this circumstance, a political program (behind which there is a political force) needs to put the entire populace's interest at the center of its struggle to win enough support and recognition from the people to maintain its political vitality in the long run. Nationalism is exactly this kind of political force that can provide both of these two functions. At the stage of national liberalization, it raises the same flag of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism that actually appealed to and mobilized the mass populace; in turn, it is with the wide support of the mass population that the liberalization can be achieved. After the national liberalization was accomplished, how to maintain the vital support from the people, in other words, to properly shift the support established at the stage of liberalization onto the new regime's political program has been, for these political leaders, the imperative problem that needs to be promptly addressed. Especially given the underdeveloped political system, the newly founded national regimes in the Arab countries usually lacked procedural legitimacy, thus the direct support from the mass populace was given immense importance under the circumstance.

What specific quality should be possessed by these Arab national regimes to win the support from the people? Ideologically, the new regimes always identify themselves with subversion of the old elitism and hierarchical dominance. And populism happens to be the right political value that features a democratic conception. Then what is populism? According to the definition in the *International Sociology Encyclopedia*, populism is in fact a collection of many kinds of political movements. The main characteristic of such a movement is that it appeals to the people, especially the ordinary citizens that are against large commercial organizations, and labor unions. For populists, the people are the source of political

virtue. They are harassed by enemies who are different, powerful and malignant. Besides, populism also shares the following features: getting support from long term supporters and liberals; extreme political rhetoric and behavior; transferring an opposite program against the trend of the time into a seemingly revolutionary program; in a way that is like a comet conspicuously rising into the heaven of politics.[7] Adam Cupper and Jessica Cupper in their *Social Science Encyclopedia* also give a definition of populism. In this book, the authors attached seven types of political phenomena to the emergence of populism. This paper mainly discusses the fourth type of populism, namely "populist dictatorship。 A charismatic leader appeals beyond conventional politicians to the masses and gains unconstitutional power by giving them bread and circuses."[8] Although different scholars hold different concepts of populism, the politics of populism in general features a political appeal to "the people", emphasizing the people as the source of its power. It is fair to say that populism is logically derived from nationalism in the field of political thinking which embodies all the characteristics of nationalistic political philosophy and which is pursued by all the new national regimes in the Arab world.

Furthermore, realistically speaking of the Arab world, most of these new regimes have a military background, such as Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya, Basher al-Assad in Syria and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, all of whom had a military background. Seeing it from the social class perspective, all of these leaders came originally from a low-middle class. The leaders from a military class have usually been different from the leaders that came from a specific class who have a clear source of interest and recognition, and they always find themselves in a difficult position, carefully weighing the gains and losses of their decision. Therefore, these Arab leaders always emphasized the width of their power basis among the public as well as the universality of their interest source in their policy and ideology appeal. In the views of legality, the orientation of "the people" has become a basic indication of the "political correctness" for the new national regimes and their source of power in the pursuit of legal governance.

As for the embodiment of populism in the political system, it usually denounces the democratic representative system (parliamentary system and party politics to be specific) as the synonym of internal political conflicts and dividedness. In the eyes of many leaders, the will of the people cannot be represented at all in such politics and the best solution to this problem is to replace it with direct democracy. For instance, Qaddafi said:

> Parliament is a fake solution to the problems of democracy. Parliament is established to represent the people yet its foundation is not democratic. Because democracy means a regime that is for the people, not some kind of regime that represents them. Just the existence of parliament can clearly show that the people are not involved in politics. Only the people's

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[7] Michael Mann, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, translated by Yayu Yuan(Chengdu: Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1989), pp.516-517.

[8] Adam,Kuper and Jessica Kuper, *The Social Science Encyclopedia*, translated by Yongjun Lin(Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1989).

involvement, not the involvement of their representatives, can be the real democracy. Parliament has become the legal obstacle for the people to exercise their rights. It does not allow the people to participate in politics so that it can enjoy the authority by representing them.[9]

He also pointed out: "the parliament has descended to the tool of robbing the people of their revolutionary regime. Today, people have the right to destroy the so-called parliament (a tool of robbery of rights and democracy as well as false representation of the people's will) through revolutionary means. The people have the right to declare the new rule: no representation."[10] As for the role that the modern political party played, Qaddafi also shared no positive impression: "political parties were founded on the theory of dictatorship and of party members ruling the people… the more parties there are, the fierce the competition for the power. Such conflicts will result in the jeopardizing every achievement the people make and destroy every plan for the well-being of the society"[11]; "Political parties is [are] modern tribes, or religious sections. A society under the rule of political parties is like one that is under the rule of tribes or religious sections. If it can be said that the tribal regime and the religious sectarian regime have been abandoned, political party regime should also be abandoned. For they behave the same and lead to the same consequence.[12]"

What populism logically desires is to abandon all the established political system and replace it with various political organizations that best serve the interests of the people. Nasser in Egypt is a good case in this point. In 1953 the Nasser regime outlawed all the political parties that existed at that moment in Egypt and replaced them with series of organizations that claimed to represent the will of the entire people, such as "Liberation Rally in 1953, National Union in 1956 and Arab Socialist Union in 1961"[13]. All other parties and labor unions in Libya were also outlawed, and a revolutionary steering committee and another national organization just like the one in Egypt, Arab socialist Union, were found in their former place.

On this kind of phenomenon, Samuel P. Huntington, who was famous for his research on politics in developing countries, once very accurately observed: "The appeal of a national association to the military lies in the universality of its membership and in its presumed utility as means of mobilizing and organizing the population to achieve the goals of national development which they assume to be shared by all. Theirs is a non-political model of nation building which fails to recognize the conflicts of interests and values inherent in any society, but particularly prevalent in one undergoing rapid social change, and which consequently makes no provision for mediating conflict and reconciling

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[9] Moammar Qaddafi, *Green Book* (Beijing: World Knowledge Publishing House, 1986), p.9.
[10] Ibid., p.10.
[11] Ibid., p.16.
[12] Ibid., pp. 19–20.
[13] Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Second Edition(London: Routledge, 2000), p.150.

interests." [14]   In essence, many newly independent Arab countries adopted a political ideology of populism.

B).The radical movement of deinstitutionalization

State-building is an overall subversion of the old political system which is not only in line with the general need of reestablishing a new regime over the old state apparatus, but also a due outcome of nationalism as a political ideology. The new regimes in Arab countries are the best showcases of this point.

First of all, the abusive application of democracy by the colonial government left little positive image of this conception among the Arab public. Usually, the level of institutionalization showcases the maturity of a corresponding political system in one country. As for the Arab countries, a democratic political system was founded during the colonial era and apparently before its social establishment could reach a level that was high enough for the full functioning of this system. This situation rendered most Arab countries' society, to various extents, divided between the social elites and its people. That is to say, most power and resources were enjoyed exclusively by the powerful in these countries (kings, big merchants or feudal landlords). For instance, in 1950, when Egypt was ruled by the Farouk Dynasty, among the 319 seats in the parliament, 115 seats were controlled by the wealthy landlords, who possessed at least 100 feddans (1 feddan equals 4200.833 square meters) and 4/5 of whom even possessed over 500 feddans of land.[15] These landlords who held vested interests in the old and unjust social system were certainly the protectors of the legitimacy of the old regime. Given situations like this, the democracy transplanted by the Western countries was due to be abused and become the false veil of legitimacy over an unjust authoritarian regime instead of a system that would express the will of the people. Some scholars observed: "In (Arab) liberal age, the administration was consisting of landlords, center city merchants and tribal leaders. Their ineptitude of establishing a harmonious operating system between themselves and their people as well as of recognizing the needs of the people was proved by facts… they did not trust their people, but rather they'd like to be the servants of the Western powers. All they ever cared about was their positions in the government and their personal interests."[16] The result of such vulgarization and instrumentalization of the democratic system will certainly be the ruining of democracy's public image in these countries.

Under this circumstance, a radical deinstitutionalization of the false democratic system would most likely win the heartfelt support from the people. These anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism measures gave legitimacy and validity to the new national regime, and in order to maintain it, they must completely abandon the old political ideal and framework left by the old colonial era. Furthermore, the

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[14] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Society*, Translated by Guanghua Wang(Shanghai: Shanghai SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1989), p.224.

[15] Eric Davis and Nicolas Gavrielides (eds.), *Statecraft in the Middle East: Oil, Historical Memory, and Popular Culture*, Board of Regents of the State of Florida, 1991, p.45.

[16] Hilal Khashan, Ibid., p.64.

low-middle class, who were the fundamental group of the new national regime, felt deep hatred for the so-called old democracies that had in fact served only the interests of the wealthy class. In light of this consideration, "they（Arab military leaders）brought about a set of extreme rhetoric in a modern form in expression of their extreme hatred against centralized economy and political privilege vested in the powerful minority."[17] They saw these democracies in the colonial era as subservient vassals to the Western powers and hollow signboards that were just for good-looking political appearances, which, viewed as symbols of reactionary tyranny, should be abolished with ultimate determination. Therefore, all these new national regimes that pursued populism in their political programs and practices shared two interrelated political undertakings in their policies: to outlaw political parties and parliament, which symbolize the colonial tyranny in the "Liberal Age" (by Albert Hourani), and to replace them with direct democracy. That is the inevitable result which comes from an internal logical deduction of historical development as well as of social structure buildups in these Arab countries.

Nasser once clearly observed when he was once addressing an Indian journalist in March, 1957:

> Can I ask a question? What is democracy? We already had a democratic system. But did democracy bring any benefit to our people? Let me tell you, the landlords and pashas ruled our people. They used this democracy to maintain their feudal system. As you have already seen, the landlords gathered peasants and drove them to vote. The peasants had no other choice but to vote as ordered… I want to liberalize the peasants and workers both socially and economically so that they can say yes. I want to let them say yes or no without affecting their daily life or the bread they get every day. All this is my understanding of democracy.[18]

Second, the movement of political institutionalization and democratization was not priorities in the agenda set by new national regimes. They were at the moment facing numerous problems that needed to be addressed promptly and properly after they had driven out the former colonists through harsh battles, especially the economy and people's live needed urgent improvement. And that takes discipline and diligence of the entire public. On the other hand, democratization would definitely lead to less control and more freedom of the public, which, in national regimes' leader's opinion, would put the political stability at stake and jeopardize the plan of economic development. Thus, in this particular historical situation, economic development was give priority over the political development. According to Rupert Emerson, the achievement of coherent national unity can properly be set as the first goal since it is an indispensable condition for internal order and security and for representative government as well.[19] In this regard, political democratization was not an

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[17] Ibid., pp.69 – 70.
[18] Roger Owen, Ibid, p.149.
[19] Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African People*(Boston: Beacon

outmost imperative to many developing countries in the Middle East that were still facing immense unpredictability. "The Middle East is struggling to develop their own resource while also protects them from external threat; it was perhaps inevitable the goals of national security, self-defense and rapid industrialization should take precedence over those of political pluralism and individual rights. Then too, like developing states in other parts of the non-European world, local regime had to cope with the pressing social problems associated with poverty, illiteracy, health, housing and rapid urbanization, as well as with an urgent desire to catch up, economically with the industrialized world. In such circumstances, it was most opted for authoritarian systems to place great emphasis on management, supervision and control.[20]" Nasser once made a direct remark in this regard: "If without freedom of life and its assurance, free election will lose its meaning and become a disorienting fraud."[21]

Furthermore, to rule a country by power centralization, policy efficiency improvement and authority establishment was quite a fascinating option. Without these various institutions, state power (behind which is the will of the ruler) can be exerted to its full extent. Thus, few Arab national leaders could resist the temptation to "deinstitutionalize" the country, outlawing all the parliament, parties, and elections that seemed to be of little value in practice. Huntington once pointed out: "The first action by either a reform or a guarding junta after it has seized power is usually to abolish all existing political parties… Even more so than other groups in society, military officers tend to see parties as the agents of disunity rather than as mechanisms for consensus-building. Their goal is community without politics, consensus by command."[22] "Deinstitutionalization" embodied the political philosophy of populism and was an effective measure for Arab national regimes to extend power and eradicate old political antagonists.

However, the function of political parties is to organize as well as to participate in different domestic matters, balance different interests and bridge various social forces and government. To function like this, political parties' existence should be rather based on political logic rather than the logic of economic effectiveness. "Consequently, the promoters of modernization like the defenders of tradition often reject and denigrate political parties. They attempt to modernize their society politically without establishing the institutions that will make their society politically stable. They pursue modernity at the expense of politics and in the process fail to achieve the one because of their neglect of the other. "[23]

C). Direct Democracy and Charismatic Leadership

Direct democracy was an old yet enchanting political ideal, which, together with indirect democracy (or representative democracy), constitutes the two basic

Press, 1960), p.290.

[20] Roger Owen, Ibid., p.240.

[21] Hilal Khashan, Ibid., p.79.

[22] Samuel Huntington, Ibid., p.223.

[23] Ibid., pp.85–86.

political prototypes for governance that is within the range of human imagination and practice. So what is direct democracy? According to Liu Junning, direct democracy means "a set of political systems in which rulers and their subjects overlap each other, letting the citizens of one country become their own masters with direct administrative power over their faults instead of via any media or representatives."[24] Then, which is better, a direct democracy or an indirect one? Different political powers, due to their various political ideals and interests, carry different answers to this question. As for nationalism (especially those from Third World countries), an innate inclination of anti-elitism is predetermined by their populism ideals. In their view, indirect democracy is the rule of a political minority, a false democracy or a democracy at an immature stage, while direct democracy is the best way for them to express their political ideals. To achieve a goal like this, the new Arab national leaders advocate a total eradication of the political predicaments between political leaders and their people, so that the will of the people shall prevail. Qaddafi once claimed: "Assembly of the people is the only way to realize democracy", "now the third universal theory provides us with actual experience of implementing direct democracy. The problem of democracy has now been solved. Now it calls upon us to work hard, eliminating the various false democracies that are actually forms of dictatorship- from parliament, religious sections, tribes, class, to single-party rule, bi-party rule and multi-party rule！"[25]

However, in a modern society, social hierarchy and labor division are an inevitable trend that will render direct democracy that demands a complete participation in the political decision-making process of the entire public very impracticable in the actual political practice. In fact, "it only counts a very small portion of the entire country population to be the actual practitioners of politics no matter what country to be surveyed. However eloquent these direct democracy theorists may argue, they cannot avoid the fact that they are the minor part of the politicians and have to claim that they are implementing direct democracy for other people thus become themselves the actual enforcers of indirect democracy right after they put their theories into practices."[26] In this regard, direct democracy will result only in oligarchy of political elites.

The nationalism politics in the Middle East with its populism ideals and political system subversion duly bring the birth of direct democracy and charismatic leadership.[27] The reason to this outcome is that direct democracy and charismatic leadership is just like a coin with two opposite sides: on one hand,

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[24] Junning Liu (Eds*), Direct Democracy and Indirect Dmocracy*(Shanghai: Shanghai SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1998), p.37.

[25] Moammar Qaddafi, Ibid., pp.37– 38.

[26] Baogang He, "Direct Democracy Theory, Forms and Referendum," in Junning Liu (Ed), *Direct Democracy and Indirect Democracy*, p.23.

[27] According to the categorization of politics by Max Weber, ruling can be seen in three types: principle type of ruling, traditional type of ruling and charismatic type of ruling. And the charismatic type of ruling is in between the former two types, whose legitimacy is built on distinctively on one individual as well as the divineness of his revelation and establishment of institutions, or his heroic spirit, or his examples. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. 1, 1998. p.2.

direct democracy leads the people to put a lot of hope on charismatic leaders; on the other, charismatic leadership emphasizes personal influence of the leaders, desiring no yoke from any form of political institutions and claiming the people to be the sole source of their power. Charismatic leadership is an irrational form of governance. It only usually comes into being at the time of material or spiritual endangerment, in which, a messiah leadership is craved to deliver the people from their suffering. That is the situation that these charismatic leaders are supposed to be set in with certain reasonability to meet the special request of a special historical period. However, charismatic leadership is apparently not stable: it rules with sentiment to the extent that all the institutions and administrators are put into one man's decision, which is of much objectiveness and randomness. Moreover, the legitimacy of such a regime is established on the basis of the popularity and distinctiveness of the leaders, such as Nasser, Qaddafi, Assad and Arafat. They not only enjoy great popularity and authority on domestic issues, but also hold great immense influence to the Arab world as well as the world as a whole. With their creativity, ideals and practice, charismatic leaders have the potential powers to alter the trend of particular political development and even alter the course of history.[28] This form of political development is parallel to the special social situation in the Middle East.

In Arab countries, the geographical settings are much of an obstacle to the development of interrelations among various elements in the process of economic productions, and therefore there is no mature social class or political group. The observation Karl Marx made on the conditions of peasant class in French feudal society also suits the situation in the Middle East: "they cannot represent themselves and must be represented by other people, who must be at the same time their ruler, a sovereign overlooking them, grant them water and sunshine."[29] The underdeveloped mode of production on one hand materially encumbered the people from participating in politics while on the other assists the establishment of hierarchical political structure and authoritarian political culture, which blinds ordinary people from making rational choice about how much to rely on their charismatic leaders. This kind of political psycho provides a cultural basis for the emergence of charismatic leadership.

Since the end of the Second World War, driven by the global trend of decolonization, the national liberalizing movement in the Middle East also reached a new height. This vigorous tide made it possible to push up the outstanding figures in the historic movement to the peak of politics, because of the excellent service in overthrowing the old regime and restoring the national pride rendered by these leaders, which won the extensive support and trust and recognition from the people. Shuzhi Peng once pointed out: "Nasser regime was indeed an authoritarian government; however, the cruelty of government had decreased due

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[28] Jinglie Wang, *Multi-angle Analysis of Turbulent Middle East* (Beijing: World Knowledge Publishing House, 1996), p.246

[29] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels*, Vol. 1(Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1972), p. 693.

to the revolutionary image of the leader. He ruled as a president, not as man with iron fist."[30]

III. The Logical Result of National Political Development

As stated above, many new Arab national regimes were the outcome of national liberation movements, from which the way of thinking failed to be altered after its completion. All the national leaders still kept the subversient way in their pursuit of values and political behaviors (that is true at least to the aspect of political development). However, it means a shift of the revolutionary view and political reality after the new government was established. The old regime is no more, neither should be the old ways of doings, otherwise the new regime would not stand for too long. In this sense, change, or more directly, change into authoritarian politics,[31] would be the basic characteristic of the Arab political development. This trend seemingly contradicted what nationalism held, but in fact it did not. Speaking in light of the political practices in Arab countries, authoritarianism is just a logical result of the development of nationalism. To be specific, the understanding of Arab countries' authoritarianism can be established into the following aspects:

A). Divisions in Nationalism Movement and Inclinations in Nationalism

Nationalism as a guideline for political movements, under different conditions and at different times, represents different goals and interests for different classes. So, it is rather fair to say that nationalism is like a chameleon in politics, ready to adopt various suits of color to be in concord with its surroundings, than to say it is a set of ideology that sticks to clear principles. Before the Arab counties were independent, nationalism associated itself with anti-imperialism and self-determination, which was in line with the requests of the entire society. That guaranteed national liberation to move forward as a political movement extensively. Then, after independence was announced, aiming at consolidating the new regime, national leaders adopted populism to obtain legitimacy. Yet, this way of dissolving clashes among classes and emphasizing mutual interests was rather a political tool for social stability than a new campaign in a new era. Bassam Tibi believes: "Under the rule of national bourgeoisie, the national consensus is no longer the coagulation of internal thoughts of the people, or the effective means of

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[30] Shuzhi Peng, "Nasser and Arab World," *Academia*, Vol.5, 1988.

[31] What needs to be clarified is that the authoritarian system is different from a totalitarian system. Because the authoritarian system lacks bureaucratic institutions that are powerful enough to transform the society, it usually resorts to every approach possible to contain its opposition faction, be it violence or seducement; or the careful manipulation of individuals, clans, corporate unions and an establishment of social clubs or professional societies. Roger Owen thinks there are four characteristics that the authoritarian is in possession of: first, no tolerance of organized groups in its political buildups; second, inclination of seeing people as part of some geological, ethical or religious group, but not as collection of individuals; third conscious suppression of the development of class awareness; fourth, political control is always prior to the economic policy. See Roger Owen, Ibid., p.35.

political mobilization, it is just a hollow shell, due to become coarse and fragile."[32]

Nationalism, once a progressive force in the society, turned into an ideology helping ruling elites to maintain social stability. These leaders tried to inherit the privileges left by the colonists.[33] And in a society that has widening gaps between social classes, it is merely impossible to heal the division only with a method of propaganda. For example, the Libyan leader, Qaddafi once brought out "universal third theory", which in theory as well as in practice both indicates a set of ideal and measures that emphasizes the people to be the master of the country. However, the government started large scale crackdowns of the anti-revolutionary group and the unfaithful just soon after the theory was brought out.[34] In some respects, the post independence rulers may be almost as distant from the bulk of the population as the imperial elite they succeed…. The rhetoric of nationalism and sovereignty is scant covering for the transfer of power front and alien foreign oligarchy to an alien native one.[35] For example, in Iraq, Arab Socialist Baath Party's nationalism ideal has gradually degenerated into the official ideology. The major function of such an ideology was not to provide intellectual enlightenment but rather to serve as an ideology of potential control.[36]

To view from an angle of political practices, a nationalism regime actually pursued totalitarianism, which indicates that the state (or government) will shoulder full responsibility of the social functions to consolidate the new regime as well as to develop the economy. This totalitarian state will first establish an authoritarian system. After some short and ambiguous time, the process of consolidating the state can be seen largely as a process of returning to an authoritarianism of the colonial time.[37] To be specific, it is to expand state power by an expansion of governmental function. And "one consequence of the state expansion is that the state power is concentrated onto the hands of a small group for state administration."[38] Such kind of authoritarian state will always try to control the entire society. "When it comes to organized group within the society, the ideal strategy for an authoritarian regime is to destroy those that it cannot control and to remake and reorder those that it can."[39] State power constantly penetrates the society, squeezing social space and individual rights, which leads to the birth of authoritarian politics. At least for the Arab countries, "the elite-mass interactive operational mode is that the state put itself in the position of welfare supplier in exchange of the unquestionable obedience of the people."[40] Thus, the nationalism regime founded on the extensive support from the people, regardless

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[32] Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-state* (New York: S.T. Martin Press, 1997), p.55.

[33] Ibid., p.64.

[34] Lillian Craig Harris, *Libya: Qadhafi's Revolution and the Modern State*, Westview press and Coom Helm, 1986, p.18.

[35] Samuel Huntington, Ibid., pp.407 – 408.

[36] Roger Owen, Ibid., p.159.

[37] Christopher,Clapham, *Third World Politics: An Introductio,*(London and Sydney: Croom Helm Ltd., 1985), p.68.

[38] Su-hoon Lee, Ibid., p.164.

[39] Roger Owen, Ibid., p.32.

[40] Hilal Khashan, Ibid., p.132.

of the extent to which it wants to establish a brand new approach of regime that is different from the former colonial regime, usually can not escape the fate of falling back to the rank of authoritarian counties.

B). Populism to Start and Authoritarianism to End

As stated above, in the Arab counties, the guiding ideology of the nationalism regime is populism. Populism, just like nationalism that can form alliances with any kind of ideology, can also be associated with any kind of campaigns or ideologies. "It is often seen as implicitly authoritarian, populist democracy being the enemy of pluralist democracy",[41] for populism is used to appeal in a group sense to the concept of "the people". While abstractly proclaiming to be democratic, it constantly neglects the respect and protection that should be guaranteed to the basic rights of its people. doubtlessly, "if the society or the state matters more than individuals, and if their goals are independent from individuals' or even go beyond theirs, then, only those who share the same goal with society and same endeavor can be seen as members of this society."[42] That is the reason for populism democracy's incompatibility to the modern democracy.

Emerson once made a deep analysis of how nationalism democracy turns into national dictatorship.

> A functioning democracy must rest upon a judicious mixture of two potentially antagonistic principles of individual and collective rights. Whenever nationalism is the main driving force, the collective principle is likely to ride roughshod over individuals and minorities whose counterclaims seem to threaten the solidarity of the nation…. Whose voice speaks for the national will? The soul of nation may reside in the simple peasants and workers, who constitute the democratic majority, but their ignorance, and lack of experience render them, it is likely to be contended unable to give it true expression. In their stead, an elite or charismatic leader takes over as the emanation of the national will which, in the vocabulary of Rousseau, is the real will of individuals, although not one they can be trusted to discover for themselves. The nation is sovereign but the exercise of the sovereignty. So the argument runs, should for the good of the nation itself be entrusted to those who can use it rightly. By this time, national democracy has been transmuted into nationalist autocracy.[43]

From the perspective of political practices, populism intends to outlaw all the political institutions like political parties, parliament, and to carry out direct democracy, of which the result is highly unpredictable. Usually, a country without political parties will lose the dynamic of transformation as well as the institutional solutions to stabilize the society from the impact of such transformations. Thus it

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[41] Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, Second Edition (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998), p.301

[42] Friedrich Hayek,*The Road to Serfdom*, translated by Mingyi Wang(Beijing: China Social Sciences Publishing House, 1997), p.136.

[43] Rupert Emerson, Ibid., p.291.

will lack the ability of implementing modernization of the political, economic and social sectors. Just as Duverger has said: "a regime without parties is of necessity a conservative regime."[44]

Huntington has once accurately observed the negative effect of abolishing the political parties:

> The military leaders are thus caught in a conflict between their own subjective preferences and values and the objective institutional needs of their society. These needs are normally threefold. First, political institutions are needed which reflect the existing distribution of power but which at the same time are able to attract and assimilate new social forces as they emerge and thus to establish an existence independent of those forces which initially gave them birth. In practice, this means that the institutions must reflect the interests of the military groups which have come to power and yet also possess the capacity eventually to transcend the interests of those groups. Secondly, in states where the military come to power the bureaucratic output agencies presumed to perform the functions of interest articulation and aggregation. Bureaucratic agencies, chief among which are the military, assume politician as well as administrative responsibilities. Consequently, political institutions are needed which can redress this balance, divorce political functions from bureaucratic agencies, and limit the latter to their own specialized tasks. Finally, political institutions are needed capable of regulating succession and providing for the transfer of power from one leader or group of leads to another without recourse to direct action in the form of coups, revolts or other bloodshed. In modern, developed politics, these three functions are largely performed by the political party system. Their distaste for politics in general and for parties in particular, however makes it difficult for military leaders to produce political institutions capable of performing these functions.[45]

C). From Charismatic Leadership to Modern Bureaucracy

Charismatic leadership, viewed by political development history, is just a transitional form of governance, destined to be replaced in time by a form of modern bureaucracy.

First of all, charismatic leadership is often given birth by a set of social and political disorder or a generally perilous situation, which predetermines the fate of this political form to be transitional. In this transition from the movement of national liberalization to the stage of state-building, many Arab countries faced unprecedented social disorder and value bewilderment. How to get rid of frequent military coups within the state? How to confront the threats posed by Israel as well as by western countries? How to come up with a solution to the various problems within the state? All these questions led to a fervent quest for a heroic leader who was both competent

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[44] Samuel Huntington, Ibid., p.372.
[45] Samuel Huntington, Ibid., pp.223– 224.

and righteous to deliver the people from their predicament, which made the charismatic leaders very recognizable to the people. Nevertheless, this transitional period can not last long and order will be restored not long after that.

Second, in such a system, the institutions are immature and therefore lack a mechanism that can serve as a channel for communication as well as a buffer zone for conflict between the leadership and the people. "As a result, a direct relationship exists between leaders and masses; in Kornhauser's terms, the masses are available for mobilization by the leaders and the leaders are accessible to influence by the masses."[46] Situations like this are necessary at the stage of national liberalization, but when it comes to the stage of state building, the undoing of this kind of regime will reveal itself: the relation between the people and the leadership is sentimental which will place in disarray the social and political order and even add unexpectedness to the decision making. All these facts make charismatic leadership but transitional.

Third, the termination of charismatic leadership will be the only solution to the crisis of succession. One of the characteristics of the charismatic leadership is that the whole political system is maintained by one person, who is also the key element for the social system to function. But, "the simplest political system is that which depends on one individual. It is also the least stable."[47] The whole political edifice is built on a sand basis, and may work for some time, but what is left on it when the former key person is gone cannot be inherited by his successor. Just as American anthropologist Clifferd Geertz once said: "the hope of political salvation as fierce as Millennium Campaign that rests on the outstanding leaders is now spreading onto many people that are apparently not so outstanding, and becoming vaguer and vaguer. The cohesive force to collect huge social energy borne by the charismatic leaders is now disappeared as the leaders' decease."[48] All that live will die of a certain death regardless of how great one man once can be. The leadership will be put at great risk when he faces a natural course and the whole system can not hold it. "…the transition from a charismatic leader to his successor is fraught with hazard…thus one can not count on replacing one charismatic leader with another."[49]

It appears to Weber that the problem of the succession of the charismatic leadership is actually a problem of trivialization of the charisma. Generally speaking, as the charisma is trivialized, charismatic leadership will mostly transform into a form of ordinary regime: heredity or bureaucracy.[50] In the Arab world, there exist both situations: Syria and Iraq belong to the former one, while Egypt and Algeria, the latter. A new legitimacy source has to be found to maintain the regime after a new leadership which certainly could not be as famous as the

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[46] Ibid, p.82.

[47] Samuel Huntington, Ibid., p.17.

[48] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, translated by Naribilige (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1999), p.268.

[49] Roy R. Andersen, Robert F. Seibert, Jon G. Wagner, *Politics and Change in the Middle East: Sources of Conflict and Accommodation*, Second Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice – Hall, Inc., 1987), p.210.

[50] Max Weber, Ibid., p.280.

predecessor comes into power (such as Sadat who claimed to be a devout Islamic president). Successors to such leadership have to find assistance from institutions to exercise power in a process of downplaying the effect of their predecessors' charisma. What actual political practices prove is that there always rests a great promise of political progress of the Middle East in the transition of leadership.

IV. Summary

That the state-building process led by Arab nationalism eventually was degraded into a form of authoritarianism fell short of many expectations. Then, why is it? Why does a political process easily fall into the abyss of authoritarianism? Arguing that the rise of nationalism bears close relations with the struggle against colonialism as well as against imperialism, it is predetermined that nationalism ideology appears to be a type of "concentration-then-out-strike". After liberation, these countries usually faced a multi-task challenge like nation-building, state-building, political-economic development, national salvation and social enlightenment. Thus they all shared characteristics of national holism (internal solidarity) and denial inclination (political xenophobia). From an internal angle of view, nationalism emphasizes state identity over individual identity; political monism over pluralism; collectivism over individualism. To the outside world, it emphasizes aboriginality and peculiarity over universality and common ground; self-sufficiency and exclusiveness over tolerance and openness. These features are all against the basic values of democracy. Some scholars point out: "after political independence, leaders will no longer [be] seeking support from the public, and the public need to adjust themselves to the dictatorship of these leaders. Not that this dictatorship is necessarily repressive or obscure, it is because most leaders believe in their ability of making decisions for the public. In this respect, democratic belief counts only a small part of these nationalism politicians' ideology."[51] Emerson said: "nationalism has betrayed the democratic promise which the nineteenth-century liberal saw in it and has become an instrument of the established ruling groups or of totalitarianism." [52]   Thus, behind nationalism, there usually hides an undemocratic inclination.

In summary, Arab countries embraced populism that later evolved into authoritarianism, which is a logical result of nationalism ideology's evolution as well as the internal request of the Arab society development. To view in the long run, authoritarianism is still a transitional political mode. As the history moves forward, authoritarianism and democracy both have the possibility to become the answer, of which trend the internal dynamics lie in which ideology nationalism actually wants to associate with. And only civic nationalism (civic statism indeed) can keep the political process in the right direction.

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[51] Christopher Clapham, Ibid, p.64.
[52] Rupert Emerson, Ibid., p.213.