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DE-ABSTRACTING THE PARADIGM
GLOBALISM VS. NATIONALISM

Abstract: In this paper I will draw some observations from recent world and Arab regional developments, with special focus on the Riyadh Summit of May 2017, as well as from anthropological insights on the role of kinship in the contemporary forms of Arabian governance and new perspectives on the origins of state formation and global trade. Considering these sights of knowledge I challenge the usefulness of the overly reified duality globalism-nationalism, the theme of this conference which poses a choice to us between a borderless world without nation-states or a world partitioned into bordered states, keeping in mind of course that the partitioning into the present nations states was imposed by European world strategists. The conference puts forth this question: "Are we all going to live in a globalized, borderless world in which nation states have been abolished, or continue with a world that remains partitioned into separate states? Will it be Globalism or will it be Nationalism? Time has come to choose a side" (International Conference Abstract: Globalism vs Nationalism, 2016. As it turns out, the situation is not that simple. First, I question the validity of the oppositional quality posing globalism against nationalism as two discrete categories, and second, I contend that integrating other factors, such as tribe and kinship, can enhance our understanding. Perhaps if we de-abstract and re-configure the paradigm we would be spared needing to choose between them.

Key words: *Arab region development, tribal kinship, presidential election*

RECENT EVENTS AND THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Balkanizing the Arab region first then trying to remap it along different borders, terrorizing and displacing populations, violating sovereignty of nations, produced a landscape of fear and terror since the 1990 s. Bush's "war on terror" was an unprovoked invasion of Iraq bringing about destabilization, and fragmentation, reducing this advanced civilizational country to a fragile, divided, dependent shadow of a nation with a feeble, uprooted, impoverished population, doomed to suffer for generations the effects of depleted uranium dumped on its population.

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Iraq is a nation which had an impressive record of educated women by any standard. It "fell" as a result of US strategy of regime change and nation building by military invasion.

The war rhetoric by invading nations included fantasies of exporting US democracy, feminism and Christianity. Democracy is at best ambiguously employed, but the irony and the joke lies in the other two, since it would be considered a move backward for Iraq given its record on women's advancement and in light of the fact that Iraq's Christianity as the closest to the original.

Destruction was enormous. Ancient seeds successfully used in stable cultivation for millennia were replaced by Monsanto ones. Oil was syphoned off by subcontractor Black Water. The global corporate hand greedily stretched to expand its profit on account of the world's original civilization and against humanity. The cradle of civilization was turned into a grave of ruins. Iraq was raped of its riches and left to chaos. This is bad globalism, that of plunder and selfish profit, and domination without any regard to people, culture, heritage or humanity (El Guindi 1992). This was a failed project by any standard, but it was a globalist project.

This mode of aggression continued by successive US administrations, extending against Syria, Libya, Yemen, etc. War became perpetual and plunder expanded and was administered directly or by proxy. In this scenario, Arabia and the Gulf monarchies of ruling families partially collaborated in return of their own security. This was at a time when the Arabia-Gulf region carved itself out of the Arab cultural fold as an autonomous economic unit (The Gulf Cooperation Council) of members who have similar modes of governance and are similarly rich in natural resources. It housed US military bases and engaged in funding US-led projects. In thinking of expanding its size there was 'talk' of including other Arab monarchies (Morocco and Jordan) as a sub-region of monarchies, since republics were considered unstable. Stability in this context was equated with continuity in same kind of governance without challenge from public participation or popular rebellions.

IS STATE A RECENT FORMATION?

Going back millennia, humans were foraging populations feeding on tubers and pulses, and by 12,000 BC some settlements began to appear along wetlands and water ways. Faced with shortages of wild resources and with unstable environments and climate challenges humans experimented with domestication of plants and animals. In response to the need for more reliable food sources they moved to the cultivation of grain, which made it possible to more reliably feed larger populations. By 10,000 BC the Middle East had established field agriculture, which unlike manioc, yams, and other tubers, involved seasonal cultivation, a need for grain storage and the drive to provide security for storage places.

Institutions developed in response to these needs and to regulate functions of administering, managing, distributing and protecting domesticated plants and animals.

Governance gradually developed to foster regional trade. Trade became possible because once camels were domesticated the nomadic Arabian population, known as the Bedouin, widened trade networks by linking desert and sown, sea and land turning the exchange of goods and services into large integrated globalized trade networks. Information was shared, new religions spread, and intermarriage extended outwards, and by 4000 BC states appeared which can govern, tax and manage such global activity. Today's globalism is similar in some aspects, sharing market, information, communication, but it uses more advanced technology, expands with more concentration of power and seeks more profit by multinational corporations.

LINKING TRIBAL KINSHIP TO NATIONALISM AND GLOBALISM

In the scholarly and political discourse on globalization and world events, 'tribe' has acquired pejorative connotations, and 'tribalism' was increasingly getting bad press (Rosen 2016). Describing populations as 'tribal' relegated them to primitive status, hence kept out of scholarly or political discourse about modern processes. Discussing tribe in debates about state and globalism continues to consider it as the 'periphery' (Nader 2015). It is contended here that tribal kinship is key to a better understanding of world processes if fully integrated and granted equal ontological state in the analysis.

We know that Arabia and the Arabian Gulf are prominent players in both state and globalist institutions and forces affecting the world today, yet they form a region characteristically marked by elaborate tribal kinship dynamics. Contrary to popular assumptions, tribes are not fixed, closed, static, territorial or exclusionary. Distorting their character served expedient, short-sighted strategies of control and domination. Exploring the details of tribal kinship in the Arabian region in the context of current events shows it be a dynamic sociopolitical form that is inherently flexible. Accordingly, understanding is better served if tribe is brought into analysis along with state and globalism in a way that would revitalize debate. Arabia and the Gulf are good examples of this.

For long the Bedouin (Arabian nomads) population belonged to a mobile non-state 'free zone' in which they carried out trade and periodic raiding of cities and villages. The Bedouins valued their freedom of movement and protected their insubordination to external governance. They were always considered a threat. Settled groups bought protection from them. States taxed them. A recurrent theme characterized tropes in mythical and poetic tales of origin, expresses the tension between the *bedu* (Arabian nomad) and the *hadar* (settled, urbanized). The Bedouins looked down on settling and those who are settled, and avoided giving them their women in marriage, preferring endogamous marriage, in order to preserve the purity of their *nasab* and to avoid *khalt al-ansab* (mixing of lineages). Purity of *nasab* is the basis of status. *Nasab* refers to a link or relations forged by birth and endogamous marriage. The two result in procreation and continuity and succession. The link is not genetic or biological or even uniformly envisioned as that of blood. But it is procreative.

El Guindi (2012), following Abu-Zeid (1991 a; 1991 b; 1991 c) and Lancaster (1981 [1997]), identified the way the Bedouin themselves construe their kin universe as a nerve center (*'asab*) that bonds, and according to my analysis, integrates relatives by groin and those by womb, binding both by corporate honor, name, collective wealth, defense and responsibility. Sections of descendants do break off from the main branches to form new groups. This is characteristic of Bedouin tribal kinship. Shared ancestry provides a bond and roots, expressed through a genealogical mapping of relatives masterfully transmitted through cognized oral tradition, now increasingly, flexibly enshrined in colorful fluid websites.

In the seventh century Islam formed a community, *Umma*, which transcended bonds by kinship to integrate within the *umma* all the religious groups worshipping the same god. But it also preserved kinship integrity, putting kinship on the sacred map by explicitly defining its internal parameters in its divine text, the Qur'an. It clearly states that kinship is forged in three ways: birth, marriage and suckling (El Guindi 2003 [1999]; 2011; 2012; 2013), thus defining the terrain of sex and marital prohibitions, and explicitly identifying prohibited relatives in Sura 4: 23. The Qur'an also recognized that human populations are organized as to different peoples and also in the form of various tribes when it stated "we made you peoples and tribes" (we made you *shu'ub wa qaba'il*) in Sura 49: 13. *Shu'ub* is plural for *sha'b* which translates into a people, a public, or a population. Both *shu'ub* and *qaba'l* can be autonomous groups or existed within the fold of States. There are several Arabic referents for a nation- like entity: *watan*, *balad*, *dawla*, *umma*. While all four referents are commonly used, more often than not *dawla* is used to refer to State and *watan* is used when invoking nationalism.

With the formation of Arabian and Gulf States Bedouins, who have been resisting settling pressures by formidable internal and external powers for very long, began to settle within State borders. They began to serve the State and receive State services. While Bedouin groups settled within Arabian States, their kin group extended beyond borders and State lines. Arabia-Gulf states strove to balance incorporating kin-based Bedouin (*bedu*) and settled groups (*hadar*) in States ruled by Shaykhs turned into Emirs with royal families. Kinship which provided cohesion also provided disruption. Ruling families served for life without public election or selection, so challenges from within tribal units and other dissidents periodically appear. In the process of succession, sons did remove fathers, cousins replaced cousins, and brothers challenged brothers.

A good example of recent efforts to incorporate the Bedouin within the boundary of a state is Qatar. The state was balancing two entities. It wanted to build a nation, consolidating it under one flag, and infuse it with national feeling among its population and yet recognize the integrity of tribal groups. It aimed to combine the celebration of both entities in a recently introduced (more recently removed) National Day. Its National celebration was lavish and colorful and involved military processions along the corniche. Residents celebrated by driving their cars painted in flag patterns and honking and cruising and fireworks. Lighting along the corniche alone was an artistic display of opulence combined with elegance. But it also funded and supported *'ardas*, public tribal celebrations of sword and

horse dancing enacted all around the city of Doha, in pitched tent structures, allocated and funded by the State, and with much fanfare.

Tribes were not bound by State borders and their branches in Qatar ceremonially received relatives arriving from across borders in Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Emirates. There were horse and sword dancing in the midst of spectacular tribal celebrations. The show of tribal solidarity was very strong. The Emir recognized the larger tribes by visiting their *'ardas*, officially receiving their hospitality before honoring the national celebrations along the corniche, marked by parades and marches of state army and other national processions.

This was Qatar's way to reaffirm both state and tribe hoping to build a unified loyalty. It is also evidence of the possibility of combining tribe and state even though the very nature of these kin groups, their real boundary, was determined by the tribe and not be the state. Tribes can be a source of cohesion but can also lead to fragmentation and rivalry. This flexibility in the structure of Bedouin kin groupings is a critical factor for arguing for the inclusion of tribal kinship equally into a new triadic paradigm, thus de-abstracting and re-configuring the familiar globalism-nationalism binary equation.

THE CURRENT SCENE

The Arab region since the 1990 s was subject to recurrent invasions and further re-mapping experimentations, this time by domination of one superpower, the United States. The experiment was globalist, intent on removing borders drawn by Europe before, and breaking up nations Europe had carved. As the recent theater of operation moved to Syria, Russia joined as an opposing axis and established a formidable presence, successfully turning the tables in favor of the embattled Syrian state. Russia saved sovereignty. The picture was changing. The US presidential election mirrored the shift — it became a domestic battlefield viscerally engaging the public which has become seriously divided along the fault line of binary partisanship with competing loyalties.

It must be noted that the American voting public has always been divided this way — a function of the two-party system played out like a competitive sports game. Engagement borders on fanaticism. This fanaticism played out dramatically following Trump's presidential success over the Democratic Party. In fact, he ran against the usual establishment of both parties, which became labeled populism. His mode of operation was that of a businessman making deals competitively, running the country like a business corporation.

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: AMERICA FIRST

The American public became over-consumed with the rise of Trump. An already racially and ideologically divided America was unmasked, the weak glue keeping it seemingly unified came apart. Trump called the glue 'political correctness'. Ethnic, religious, and ideological divisions were intensifying. Anti-Trump emotions were visceral. Blacks were emerging as a dissident force carving significant space.

No doubt, his rise had also dismantled the usual partisanship which is cultivated as central to the domestic politics of the United States. The American people were not prepared for a new kind of domestic politics. Divisions grew among Republicans and Democrats and between them. To the voting public, partisanship as they know it became blurred. Liberals were adopting globalist neo-con agendas, adopting the same military interventionist strategy, but moved from regime change and nation-building to a regional remapping. This was implemented in the shape of 'the Caliphate' and its various labels: ISIS, ISIL, IS, Nusra, Da'esh, along with Muslim Brothers, Qa'da, etc. This atomization by

multi-labeling was distracting the world from the fact that recruited militias from around the world were systematically funded and supported for the purpose of interventionist violence to carve a region replacing Arab nation-states, after destabilizing and breaking up these states from within.

However, there is no doubt in the mind of politicians worldwide and experts that this globalist strategy failed even for America, resulting in too much damage and destruction. The global war on terror only brought the world terror. Terror became the world's nightmare. The dream of a Caliphate collapsed. Globalism as an overall umbrella for the world was being reconsidered.

Trump ran on "America First" and "Make America Great Again" — slogans of economic and nationalist bent held appeal among his supporters. He was interested in moving out of this quagmire and to new deals. With bravado he pushed for a surgical swift "taking out' these terrorist Muslims. Russia was already rising in its war on terror against the Syrian State. Egypt was a rising opponent of the terror which brutally encroached its own borders and threatened its people's lives. It was in this mixed and confused context that the Riyadh Summit of May 20–21, 2017 must be seen.

EGYPT AND TAKFIRIS: EGYPT FIRST

Armed groups using different names violated Egypt's borders in Sinai and in Wahat seriously threatening national security, and internally terrorized Egyptians who feared walking out of their homes. In this battle, the Muslim Brothers known as the *Gama'a*, lost popular legitimacy, associational balance, and any political bearing. The term *jihadis* promoted by western academics and politicians was misleading as it seemed to attribute something positive to violent extremism, thus justifying it. Egypt stopped calling the *Gama'a* by the name it gave itself 'Muslim Brothers', as Egyptians felt that they are neither Muslim nor brothers. The label used instead was *'takfiris'*, focusing on the feature of intolerance of others, which in the case of Egypt the target became the Copts.

The government pushed for *'tagdid al-khitab al-dini'*, a renewing of Islamic discourse. The campaign to combat extremist intolerance trafficked in the name of Islam grew and spread across educational and religious institutions and mosques. Al-Azhar was supported to retake the lead as the source of the officially nurtured, more scholarly, moderate Islam, countering the popular hold of *takfiri* thought. In the process Al-Azhar itself began discovered problems and loopholes within,

such that reconfiguring *al-Khitab al-Dini*, applied to Al-Azhar as well. It reached mosque pulpits. Combatting extremism was approached holistically, not solely confined to military action. The new goal was to nip it in the bud, so to speak.

Official discourse and most media outlets dropped the use of distinct names, claims of any Islamic basis or of suggested revolutionary character. To Egypt, the emperor lost his clothes. They are all 'takfiris' (those adopting a posture that others are nonbelievers) operating within an umbrella of extremism as intolerant groups of violence, without any legitimate Islamic basis. The 'Muslim Brothers', who threatened lives, institutions and the national security of Egypt became no more a part of the Egyptian political landscape. They are seen as element within a global encroaching terrorist force that is well funded, well-armed, and well-covered by legitimacy and ideological justifications from certain powers. The Egyptian people rejected any threat to its unique societal fabric inclusive of Muslims, Copts and Jews, Sunnis, Shi'as and Sufis, tribal and other groupings. The Brotherhood leadership which incited violence was arrested or is being relentlessly pursued as trials continue on the basis of legal evidence demonstrating acts of violence against people, institutions, or police force. Prominent leaders were living and supported in Qatar. Egypt delivered lists of names of those charged with using violence and who are protected in Qatar. They were sought for trial. Prominent among these is Sheikh Yusuf al- Qaradawi who heads the Qatar-backed International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS), considered by many to be among Islam's foremost living scholars who is widely viewed as a spiritual guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, and who is associated, according to some sources, with the creation of groups like the Muslim Council of Elders and the Global Forum for Prompting Peace in Muslim Societies as well as the Sawab and Hedayah Centres' anti-extremism messaging initiatives in collaboration with the United States and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum.

The situation is different for the Gulf States who carved their existence either in the shadow of Saudi Arabia or who extended Wahhabism as a State sect. The only Gulf State to adopt Wahhabism is Qatar. The Emirates excluded the ultra-conservative Wahhabism in its State formation. This strand of ultra-conservatism was developed by Mohammed ibn Abdul Wahhab in the 18th century and shared power with the Saud leadership in its formation. Recently Prince Mohammed bin Zayed of the UAE fought against this conservatism in Sunni Islam. This is not as easy for the Saudi leadership which had adopted this overriding puritanism throughout its history. The UAE campaigned against this puritanism particularly since the popular Arab uprisings, with particular mention of Egypt in 2011. The UAE was successful in authoritatively with the help of al-Azhar to exclude Wahhabism from Sunni Islam.

Puritanist (Salafism) and extremist interpretations of Islam were assaulted in a statement issued last year in the context of a UAE-funded conference in the Chechen capital of Grozny. Participants included the imam of the Al-Azhar Grand Mosque in Cairo, Ahmed El- Tayeb; Egyptian Grand Mufti Shawki Allam; former Egyptian Grand Mufti and Sufi authority Ali Gomaa. The war on terror was conducted from different fronts and within the newly formed Arab Quartet.

THE RIYADH SUMMIT

The 'Arab Islamic American Summit' held in Riyadh in May 20–21, 2017 was marked by surreal ceremonial events ranging from a display of wealth (President Trump and Saudi royalty) and fashion (First Lady Melania) and cultural presentations of hospitality and sword dancing (Arabian Bedouin). This celebration was, in fact, a recognition of the failure of the global war on terror with its strategies of hard and soft power, and the subsequent ill-conceived strategy to replace the Middle East, stable monarchies, and republics with an alternative Islamic caliphate. But it is also about much more.

It convened under the banner "Together We Prevail. In my assessment, the key political player in that Summit was Egypt. Egypt is the one member of the quartet, the only non-Arabian, but who has remained consistent in its position against violations of national sovereignty. It was never supportive of the Caliphate (ISIS). Its support for sovereign states was explicit.

Egypt has undergone major transformations since its two revolutions of January 25th, 2011 and June 30th, 2013: removing two presidents, undertaking rapid major political, economic, religious, constitutional, and educational reform projects while combatting overwhelming waves of encroaching terrorist violence. Having demonstrated reasonable success in combatting terrorist violence within and at its borders since the revolution of 2013, Egypt was in a good position to formulate a manifesto for countering extremism which it did. The Summit was the forum in which President Trump ceremonially passed the gavel of the war on terror to the newly formed quartet of nations: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Bahrain. Qatar was charged with harboring terrorists and supporting terrorism. Detailed evidence was presented.

EGYPT'S MANIFESTO

At the Summit Egypt presented a declaration of orientation, principles, and action that together constituted the strategy for combatting "globalized terrorism". It amounted to a counter-extremism Manifesto, comprising an explicit strategic vision, stating that "terrorism does not constitute simply those who carry weapons, but also those who provide training, funding, arming, political and ideological cover, and other hidden support". The agenda was set. The culprit, identified. It was to deal with 'root causes' and factors that constitute the lifeline of extremism: training, funding, arming, and hidden processes that provide it with ideological cover. The charging entity, with US blessing, was the Arab Quartet: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Emirates, and Bahrain. They were unified on demands and methods. Qatar was identified as the one guilty of harboring terrorists and feeding its lifeline thus leading to a fragmentation of Arabia-Gulf unity and to a disunity of the Arab world. Qatar was accused of interfering in the affairs of neighboring states and supporting destabilizing terrorist campaigns against them. The Manifesto moved the issue out of the tribal fold and into that of international standards of conflict.

On June 5, 2017, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia severed all diplomatic, economic, and travel ties with Qatar, ascending thus to new regional positions of power. At first, this was seen as a minor crisis, one that was met with dismissal and denial, as was expressed by some former Qatari colleagues who described it as "a spat among Gulf brothers" counting on earlier precedence with Saudi Arabia and the Emirates who warned Qatar about unwanted intervention in their internal affairs and weaponizing its ideological tool of al-Jazeera satellite channel against them. These earlier crises were amicably resolved even though demands were not met.

This boycott by the Quartet is now beyond 100 days. The Quartet is adamant about its demands and Qatar has not fulfilled their demands, although quietly Qatar is beginning to show signs of giving in. Tribal tensions developed in the Gulf region. An alternative to the existing ruling family in Qatar has come forth. He is from the same tribe, but a patrilateral parallel cousin to the prince seeking to replace the Emir. In response, the present ruler clamped strongly on the dissenting family branch. However, signs of economic strains on Qatar are showing, and opposition is building. We can see how all the factors discussed above, global economic forces, the state, and the tribe are competing and integrating. The colleague who previously dismissed the boycott as a spat among brothers, more recently expressed a somewhat different feeling, one showing the weight of the lingering crises. "We have to choose between loyalty to the state and loyalty to our tribe which extends beyond to the three Gulf States of the quartet. As a citizen of a State one has to support it", he said. This is an emergent discourse.

IMPLICATIONS OF QUARTET BOYCOTT

I identify a number of implications emerging out of the Quartet boycott of Qatar:

1. Breakup of gulf entity. One Arabian and two Gulf States are united against one Gulf State. Egypt is a member of the Quartet but not of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

2. Reestablishing Arab as region. The concern of terrorism is regional.

3. Unity on the basis of international standards. It was a coalition built using international standards which operated on basis of international legalities rather than local kinship considerations.

4. Break in tribal cohesion. Given the extension of tribal relations beyond state borders, the boycott put tribal loyalty against State loyalty, and tribal branches against each other.

5. Regional power of sanctions; this marks a precedence of non-super powers empowered to enforce sanctions and a boycott against regional and sub-regional member.

6. Cooperating against terror and leading the war on terror led to the terror's near-collapse. There is no caliphate in the horizon. Guerilla violence continues on a small scale.

CONCLUSION

It is contended here that the duality of globalism-nationalism must dissolve to include units that are kinship-based. We have tribally organized States governed by tribal royal families as active partners in globalism. Ignoring this is in part due to a lack of understanding of kinship as a flexible category of organizing that can be integrated with both state and global processes. Observers tended to mistakenly assume that tribal organizing represents a point in a scale of progress that ends when the development of the state begins and particularly when global processes become a dominant force in the world as it has today. The case of the Arabian/Gulf region shows that all three developments can co- exist and operate in integrated ways which are effective and relevant in current affairs. There are multiple notions of nation expressed in Arabic, *watan, balad, dawla, umma* which can integrate into a comprehensive nationhood with a secure state and stable institutions embracing tribal entities, ethnic and religious groups. Globalism and nationalism are simultaneously merged and differentiated for a better analytic paradigm.

Some questions are: can globalism sustain market without imposing homogeneity, maintain communication without invading privacy, gather information without exploitation, and preserve security without military invasions violating sovereignty. Globalization succeeded in building institutions mediating conflict, preserving and protecting heritage, observing peace in conflict, conducting international trials for justice, while creating global corporate capitalist ones edifices like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Globalism failed when it took the form of superpowers using interventionist military force. By abandoning the interventionist modes, It can integrate with sovereign state and tribe. Using measures of balance among these units might give us a more successful paradigm and a better understanding and hope for peace.

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