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Inna Kostyrya / Nataliia Yanchenko



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Ibn Khaldun's Concepts in the Mirror of Arab Political and Economic Identity

Inna Kostyrya*

Kyiv National University of Culture and Art (Kyiv, Ukraine)

Nataliia Yanchenko**

Kyiv National University of Culture and Art (Kyiv, Ukraine)

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Abstract

The modern Arab countries endure problems like the instability of their political systems, the crisis of their state institutions, and the weakness and asymmetry of their integration, globalization, and localization processes. To gain perspective on these problems, this article analyses the history and dynamics of the spiritual, cultural, economic, and political spheres of Arab life. The main research methods were the historical-logical and the comparative, which allowed the authors to trace the development of the political, economic, and philosophical-religious thought of the Arab countries and determine the origins of these concepts. As a research hypothesis it is stated that the key subjective factor influencing the political decision-making markets are the interests of the elite and political leaders in the context of resolving conflicts in the tradition of Muslim diplomacy. The article examines the concepts of the medieval scientist and diplomat Al Khaldun to establish the origins and logic of the modern international economic and political life of the countries of the Arab League. The authors conclude by a comparative analysis that Egyptian leaders have supreme power in making foreign policy decisions due to a tradition of strong centralized power, while the personal traits and characteristics of the country's leaders often determine its foreign policy.

Keywords: Arab elite, foreign policy, Khaldun's law, Muslim diplomacy, theory of switching ties.

* Doctor in Political Sciences, Professor, Dean Department of International Relations, Kyiv National University of Culture and Art, 01133, 36, Yevhena Konovaltsia Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Email: kostyrya@acu-edu.cc, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2654-8472>

** Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Kyiv National University of Culture and Art, 01133, 36, Yevhena Konovaltsia Str., Kyiv, Ukraine, Email: yanchenko8244@acu-edu.cc, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6729-2421>

Los conceptos de Ibn Khaldun en el espejo de la identidad política y económica árabe

Inna Kostyrya

Kyiv National University of Culture and Art (Kyiv, Ukraine)

Nataliia Yanchenko

Kyiv National University of Culture and Art (Kyiv, Ukraine)

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Resumen

Los países árabes modernos sufren problemas como la inestabilidad de los sistemas políticos, la crisis de las instituciones estatales y la debilidad y asimetría de los procesos de integración, globalización y localización. Para obtener una mejor perspectiva sobre estos problemas, este artículo tiene como objetivo estudiar y analizar las esferas etnohistórica, espiritual, cultural, económica y política de la vida árabe. Los principales métodos de investigación fueron métodos histórico-lógicos y comparativos que permitieron a los autores rastrear el desarrollo del pensamiento político-económico y filosófico-religioso de los países árabes. Como hipótesis de investigación se afirma que el factor clave que influye en los mercados de toma de decisiones políticas son los intereses de la élite y los líderes políticos en el contexto de la resolución de conflictos en la tradición de la diplomacia musulmana. El artículo examina los conceptos del científico y diplomático medieval Al Khaldun con el fin de establecer los orígenes y la lógica de la vida económica y política internacional moderna de los países de la Liga Árabe. Los autores concluyen mediante un análisis comparativo que los líderes egipcios tienen el poder supremo en la toma de decisiones de política exterior debido a una tradición de fuerte poder centralizado, mientras que los rasgos y características personales de los líderes del país a menudo determinan su política exterior.

Palabras clave: élite árabe, política exterior, ley de Khaldun, diplomacia musulmana, teoría del intercambio de vínculos.

Introduction

Various theoretical schools and paradigms have analyzed thoroughly the instability of the political systems of modern Arab countries, the crisis of their state institutions, and the weaknesses of their integration processes¹. However, the complexity, diversity, and overflow of domestic and foreign policy and its relationship with the interests of various actors of international and world politics in this region require an adequate explanation and the use of a number of classical and non-standard approaches. Among these approaches, our attention has been drawn to attempts to discover the roots of these processes in the eventful history of the Arabs. Analysing this context theoretically, several ideas need to be considered thoroughly:

- Various political and economic processes in the modern political life of Arab states are rooted in centuries-old spiritual and cultural traditions.
- The formation of political systems in the Arab world under the influence of Western models and examples ended with acceptable models of a nation state.
- The process of forming a foreign policy identity has a diverse and incomplete character due to both objective and subjective factors.

The historiography of this problem is quite extensive. It includes works on the classical history of the Arab-Muslim world² and the works of political scientists who have analysed the current relations in the region³, and various state building issues⁴. These authors focus on aspects such as: 1) the national development of the Arab countries; 2) the leader's influence on foreign policy; 3) the typologies of political

¹ Josef Abrhám et al., "Energy Security Issues in Contemporary Europe," *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues* 7, no. 3 (2018): 387-398. [https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2018.7.3\(1\)](https://doi.org/10.9770/jssi.2018.7.3(1))

² Laroussi Amri, "Pour une sociologie des ruptures. La tribu au Maghreb medieval," *Cahiers d'études Africaines* 2 (1997): 310. <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesafriaines.31>; Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 302; Patricia Crone, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in First Centuries of Islam* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 157; Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of 'Abbasid Rule* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 348; C.B. Lewis, *The Regnal Titles of the First Abbasid Caliphs* (New Delhi: Dr. Zakir Husain Presentation Volume, 1968), 237.

³ Nicholas S. Hopkins and Saad Eddin Ibrahim, eds., *Arab Society: Class, Gender, Power, and Development* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2006), 416; Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 381.

⁴ Fathi Triki, *L'esprit historien dans la civilisation arabe et islamique* (Tunis: Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales de Tunis, 1991), 400; Nael Shama, *Egyptian Foreign Policy from Mubarak to Morsi: Against the National Interest* (London: Routledge, 2013), 280.

leadership⁵; 4) the problems of self-identification of Egypt⁶; 5) the procedures for making strategic decisions⁷; 6) the country's positioning in the international arena⁸. For generalization, it should be noted that the main conclusions of the above specialists, in the case of Egypt, are mainly related to: 1) the continuity of the country's foreign policy since 1952; and 2) the fact that each leader had his own vision of Egypt's foreign policy.

The above-listed authors conducted their research in the following paradigms: 1) theological and ideological, 2) positivist, and 3) civilizational. But at the same time, it is necessary to consider that instability and rapid volatility of the political process have become characteristic of the socio-political development of the Middle East and North Africa regions. These dynamics require an integrated approach. As mentioned above, we set ourselves the task to investigate the ethno-historical, spiritual, cultural, economic, and political spheres and dynamics of the life of the peoples of the Arab region using a systematic approach. Also, the analysis of this theoretical discourse testifies to the fact that little research has been done combining the historical-logical method and the systematic approach. A comprehensive examination of the role of traditional concepts in the modern Arab political systems is necessary.

⁵ Margaret Hermann, "Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7-46, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600126>; Stephen Benedict Dyson and Thomas Preston, "Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making," *Political Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2006): 265-288, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2006.00006.x>; John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Anatomy of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2012), 206.

⁶ Ibrahim A. Karawan, "Sadat and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Revisited," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (1994): 249-266, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800060232>; Ibrahim Karawan, "Foreign Policy Restructuring: Egypt's Disengagement from the Arab-Israeli Conflict Revisited," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, no. 3 (2005): 325-338, <https://doi.org/10.22718/kg.2019.3.1.183>; J. Grimm and S. Roll, "Egyptian Foreign Policy under Mohamed Morsi: Domestic Considerations and Economic Constraints," *SWP Comments* 35 (2012): 1-3.

⁷ Elsa Shalaby, "Egypt's Foreign Policy 1952-1992: Some Personal Reflections," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 23, no. 3 (1992): 107-115, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010692023003012>; Noor-ul-Ain Khawaja, "Egypt's Foreign Policy Analysis: From Nasser to Morsi," *Pakistan Horizon* 66, no. 1/2 (2013): 43-63; Ahmed Hayri Duman, "Leaders and Egyptian Foreign Policy: Individual Factors During Nasser and Morsi Periods," *Ortadoğu Etütleri* 12, no. 2 (2020): 369-389.

⁸ Noah Mellor, *Egyptian Dream: Egyptian National Identity and Uprisings* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 200; Bahgat Korany, "Egypt: Between Overstretch and Pivotalness in its Foreign Policy" in *Diplomacy and Developing Nations: Post-Cold War Foreign Policy-Making Structures and Processes*, ed. Maurice A. East and Justin Robertson (London: Routledge, 2012), 154-180; Shibley Telhamy and Michael Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (Ithaca, New York & London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 224; Amr G.E. Sabet, "Geopolitics of Identity: Egypt's Lost Peace," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2017): 51-92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17550912.2017.1281552>; Hassan Ahmadian, "Egyptian Foreign Policy Identities," *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 5, no. 3 (2014): 5-31.

Therefore, it was extremely important for our research to turn to the ideas of the thinker of the Arab East, Ibn Khaldun⁹. Ibn Khaldun went down in history as one of the famous Arab diplomats and scholars. He was born in 1332 in Tunisia into a family of high-ranking officials and scholars from Andalusia, descendants of the ancient Yemeni Arabs. Ibn Khaldun received an excellent religious, literary, and scientific education. His teachers were prominent scholars of the Maghreb. In 1352, Ibn Khaldun went to Fez, where he spent ten years, becoming chancellor at the court of Sultan Abu Salim. He visited Granada in 1362, Bougie and Tlemcen. From his travels and diplomatic missions, Al Khaldun learned about the life of the court, the work of government officials, and the customs of the Arab and Berber tribes. During his stay at the court of Ibn Salam, Ibn Khaldun drew from these experiences to prepare the first version of the “Introduction” (“Mukaddim”). In Tunisia, Ibn Khaldun began teaching and at the same time finished the first version of *Kitab al-Ibar* (“Book of instructive examples”), a monumental work on world history¹⁰.

It must also be recognized that since 1354, when Ibn Khaldun served as secretary and ambassador to many rulers of the Maghreb and Spain and was the supreme judge in Egypt, a long time has passed. Many aspects and factors of the medieval Egyptian society are radically different. However, examining medieval Egyptian turns out to be very insightful, and the approach, usual then, of including multiple causal relationships and cyclical patterns is quite modern and useful¹¹. It is not surprising that Ibn Khaldun's ideas are now being developed and refined in mathematical modelling by foreign and domestic authors. Even politicians seek nowadays advice in the pages of the main intellectual achievement of Ibn Khaldun—the book “Al-Mukaddim” (Introduction to world history). This book provides a completely scientific sociodynamic explanation of the cycles of the succession of dynasties, based on an analysis of the complex interaction of political, military, moral-psychological, economic, geographical, climatic, and other factors. Even now we witness in the Arab world frequent displacement of leaders and the emergence of new and sometimes unexpected figures as heads of state. These changes, as a rule, are based on violence, the dissolution of the representative bodies of power, and the removal of legally elected presidents.

⁹ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 512.

¹⁰ Jean David C. Boulakia, “Ibn Khaldun: A Fourteenth-Century Economist,” *Journal of Political Economy* 79, no. 5 (1971): 1105-1118.

¹¹ Álvaro Hernando Martínez Montufar and Daniel Laureano Noguera Santander, “Guarantee of the Constitutional Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Multinationalism and Neoconstitutionalism,” *Novum Jus* 11, no. 2 (2017): 19-51, <https://doi.org/10.14718/NovumJus.2017.11.2.2>

Methodological Framework

The key concept in Ibn Khaldun's theory is *asabiya*. Considering that the connotations of this concept include courage, inspiration, fortitude, justice, honour, and a sense of one's own righteousness, we understand *asabiya* as a militant solidarity and use the term without translation. Ibn Khaldun's notion of *asabiya* is not identical, but quite comparable with concepts of the classical and modern sociology such as the "moral strength" of Emil Durkheim, the "charisma" of Max Weber, the "passionarity" of Lev Gumilyov, and the "high emotional energy" of Randall Collins¹². Ibn Khaldun finds the highest level of *asabiya* among the Bedouins living in harsh conditions. On the other hand, in a group that comes to power, *asabiya* is lost within four to five generations. As a result, the kingdom collapses, and a new dynasty with a high level of *asabiya* comes to power. According to Al Khaldun's concept¹³, the reasons for the decline of *asabiya* are the following:

- The leader of the group that seized power seeks to monopolize the glory of victory and, accordingly, the right to rule. He is waging a tough fight with his allies. Mercenaries are recruited from the lower classes to avoid increased unnecessary ambition. The system of power is hierarchical. The place of the former commonwealth with high *asabiya* is taken by mercenary activity, which is by no means characterized by selflessness and solidarity.
- The rulers desire and display luxury to assert status and power.
- Since the rulers are the highest role models for lower-ranking officials, and the rulers themselves cannot allow any of their subordinates to surpass them in luxury, the craving for prestigious consumption is quickly transmitted from top to bottom and from bottom to top.
- The logic of granting privileges, especially when changing from one generation to another, causes a shift in motivation to preserve and maintain the achieved level and quality of life, which reduces the level of *asabiya*. Not only the interests of the population, but even the stability of society and the state itself are at stake.

Ibn Khaldun shows a proxiological approach to the spheres of human life and their collective organization and activities. His concept of "social physics" supports

¹² A.N. Kolumbet et al., "Improvement of Cyclists' Pedaling Technique by Studying their Individual Differences," *Journal of Physical Education and Sport* 19, no. 3 (2019): 1577-1584, <https://doi.org/10.7752/jpes.2019.03229>

¹³ Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 224-251.

our thesis. Al Khaldun, arguing in favour of the priority of spirituality, insists on recognizing the legitimate progress of human society due to economic factors and on the need to unite people to meet needs¹⁴. Noting that the living conditions of different generations depend on how people earn a living, Ibn Khaldun puts forward his own chronology of social progress. He traces the progress of humans, from the initial period of human societies and the state of primitiveness, associated with agriculture and livestock, to the state of civilization associated with the development of crafts, trade, and science, and the formation and growth of urban power. According to the thinker, agriculture produces only the necessary, because agriculture and livestock produce sufficient goods to meet priority needs. The creation of a surplus that exceeds the means necessary for human existence is possible only in cities where there is a surplus of labour, where the division of labour is widely used, and where industry and trade are developing¹⁵.

Thus, Ibn Khaldun associated civilization and the production of surplus with markets and intensive labour products. He proclaimed private property as the basis of public order and as an eternal and unchangeable gift of nature. According to the Arab thinker, even with the increase of individual wealth, the class division of society based on property and the principle of "supremacy" will never disappear. He expressed interesting ideas about the product, its properties, pricing, and the market role. Ibn Khaldun analysed the production of commodities based on supply and demand: the number of goods offered on the market, the demography of the country, natural factors, the state taxes, and fees, and so on¹⁶. According to the Arab thinker, the economic rise of a country contributes to the growth of the urban population and causes lower prices for basic items and rising prices for luxury items; during an economic deterioration the reverse process occurs¹⁷. He was also a supporter of moderate taxes and fees as an important factor for the economic prosperity of the country.

According to Ibn Khaldun, precious metals do not create wealth. For example, the land of Sudan has a lot of gold, but the country remains poor, because the

¹⁴ Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 224-251.

¹⁵ Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 224-251.

¹⁶ Volodymyr Lagodiienko et al., "Choosing Effective Internet Marketing Tools in Strategic Management," *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 8, no. 3 (2019): 5220-5225, <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.C5868.098319>; Ruslan Kovalenko et al., "Occupational Safety and Health of Factory Workers in European Countries in the Nineteenth Century: Historical and Legal Analysis," *Labor History* 61, no. 3-4 (2020): 388-400, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2020.1775796>.

¹⁷ Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 328.

welfare of the people does not depend on the availability of precious metals, but on the development of public life based on the diligence of the population. But Al-Khaldun assigned an important role to money, arguing that gold and silver are a measure of the value of everything that people create through their labour, storage, income, savings, and treasures. Gold and silver have a stable value and are therefore a convenient form of wealth storage. Ibn Khaldun was a supporter of full-fledged money and categorically condemned the adulteration of coins by rulers, which became more widespread during the Middle Ages. He wrote that people who “turn copper into silver and gold are thieves, the worst of thieves, because they appropriate this gold.”

Source of prestige, power is the object of human desires and aspirations, constantly pushing him to action. Power is not strong by nature, but constantly passes from one group to another, from one nation to another. As a means of redistributing surpluses and ordering society, it plays a crucial role in the transition of phases. It is on this principle that Ibn Khaldun builds his work on the history of society. He traces the path of peoples, mainly Arabs and Berbers, who one after another won power: from nomadic to domination over other peoples and, finally, to their fall. This basic concept includes many small, related ones. In social terms it includes cohesion, kinship, patronage, honour; in the political sphere, coercion, violence, domination, and power; in the economic realm, means of subsistence or earnings, value, labour. Ibn Khaldun's concepts, his approach to the laws of life of the Arab-Berber society, and his synthetic approach to the history of the Islamic world, remain to this day an inexhaustible source of knowledge for historians and ethnographers.

Results

The theory of switching ties: from the inviolability of sovereignty to foreign policy identity

In the analysis of the role of elites in relation to modern trends in economy and political life, the experience of al-Khaldun's praxeology is very useful. Arab states, monarchies on the path of formation of elites, ruling dynasties, and the individuality of the monarch himself, all have followed their own historical path of development. An important role in the development of business groups in the system of economic power and public administration in the institution of power has been the relationship between various political and traditional institutions, ruling families, clans, and

subjects, also in Arab monarchies¹⁸. In the functioning of the state the following institutions of dynastic rule, which are not constitutionally established, also have a significant impact on the decision-making process of monarchs:

- The “family council”, which includes close relatives of the ruler of the male branches of the ruling clan.
- The advisory council participates in the activities of the three spheres of power: legislative, executive, and judicial.
- “Informal meetings”. These are attended by representatives of the ruling family, tribal nobles, intellectuals, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and religious circles.

Members of the ruling families occupy the most important positions in the governments and state apparatuses of monarchies. In some Arab countries, the ruling clans have held power for centuries (in Bahrain since 1782, in Qatar since 1822)¹⁹. Of course, such persistence of political groups sometimes give rise to arguments “against” economic integration with other countries by the national elites (business groups). Here we can focus on the business groups of the League of Arab States and especially the “oil monarchies”, where they have contributed to the organization of several economic institutions:

- They are based on close personal ties of clan or ethnic nature.
- In their development they lobbied to some extent for state support in the choice of export-oriented or import substitution.
- There is an internalization of transactions through political instruments to influence the vectors of networks of contracts between local guarantors, in the form of state institutions, and owners of financial resources given the closed political markets, in contrast to Western countries²⁰.

The fact is that the notion of sovereignty is considered inviolable for the countries of the League of Arab States and under no circumstances are they willing to give it up,

¹⁸ Germán Silva García, “Is Law Just A Fairy Tale? Critical Analysis Of Comprehensive Sociology Of Law,” *Novum Jus* 16, no. 2 (2022): 49-75, <https://doi.org/10.14718/NovumJus.2022.16.2.3>.

¹⁹ Galbraith, *The Anatomy of Power*, 155.

²⁰ Agota Giedre Raišienė et al., “Global Dominants of Chinese Trade Policy Development: Opportunities and Threats for Cooperation with Ukraine,” *Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019): 193-207, <https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2019/12-1/13>

even if integration provides significant economic benefits²¹. As a result, the role of national government institutions is growing. That is, preference is given to bilateral trade agreements, rather than to the creation of multilateral intergovernmental institutions. Hence, the seemingly tempting version of “integration individualism,” the cost of free riding (unilateral “exit from the game”) for the country will be too high both in economic terms and in the overall reputation among the international community.

Ibn Khaldun, in his reasoning about power and elites, comes to several conclusions. The ruling class, upon achieving authoritarian power and increasing needs, reduces its ability to adequately respond to the depletion of public resources, the decline in economic activity, the degradation of the population, and loss of power. In these conditions, the demonstration of power and prosperity in front of the population and the external rivals and the bribery of henchmen can postpone but not prevent the collapse of the regime and the change of power. It should be noted that this model is applicable to many historical eras, in which periods of relative stability are followed by periods of conflicts, crises and upheavals²².

In the case of Egypt, the theory of switching ties was demonstrated when Nasser introduced the pan-Arab concept in politics²³. These were actions to position the confrontation with Israel as Egypt’s foreign policy identity. These intentions became almost a personal affair for Nasser and were conceived as a compensation for the humiliation and defeat in the Palestinian war of 1948. Nasser tried to unite the Arab countries under his rule during the fight against Zionism. The Egyptian elite continued to build up the military to strengthen the country’s power and security. The army was seen as an effective tool for realizing the foreign policy goals of the state and confronting the “Zionist enemy”²⁴. Nasser wanted to use this as an opportunity to get out of the confrontation between the great powers, which would allow his country to attract additional resources and obtain economic benefits²⁵.

²¹ Mykola Inshyn et al., “European Standards for the Protection of Social Rights of Labor Migrants,” *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 22, no. 6 (2019): 1-8.

²² Alla Khomutenko et al., “Tools of the Neuro-fuzzy Model of Information Risk Management in National Security,” *International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology* 8, no. 6 (2019): 4526-4530, <https://doi.org/10.35940/ijeat.F8842.088619>; Serhii Perepolkin and Polina Trostianska, “The Gist of the World Customs Organization,” *Journal of International Legal Communication* 1, no. 1 (2021): 139-148. <https://doi.org/10.32612/iuw.27201643.2021.1.pp.139-148>

²³ Gamal Abdul Nasser, *The philosophy of the Revolution* (New York: Economica Books, 1959), 119.

²⁴ Khawaja, “Egypt’s Foreign Policy,” 56-57.

²⁵ Duman, “Leaders,” 374.

On the other hand, the pan-Arab identity imposed restrictions on the choice of vectors for the formation of an adequate foreign policy for Egypt. Nasser had certainly achieved a measure of political and moral successes. But these were not military victories. Thus, the hasty actions of the country's leadership led to erroneous conclusions and decisions. The Pan-Arab policy required significant material and spiritual investments and expenses. In this context, it became obvious to all the actors that such policy didn't correspond to the capabilities and intentions of the Egyptian elite. In the 1950s, the ideology of pan-Arabism reached its peak in Egypt, and in the next decade, with the collapse of the alliance with Syria, it was replaced by an era of rejection of this identity and its associated policies. Because Nasser brought Egypt and the Arabs in general to the world arena, he was the most influential leader in the Arab East in the twentieth century. At the same time, the deep contradictions between the elites in their struggle for primacy in the relations with the industrialized countries of Europe and America, created significant obstacles to Nasser's idea of uniting the Arab states²⁶. In addition, Nasser's pan-Arabism was radical and allowed the use of force in the name of the triumph of ideas, a concept which alarmed the Arab elites. In particular, the long-term participation of Egypt in the civil war in Yemen had a very negative impact on the image of Cairo in the Arab world.

The spirit of the Muslim Brotherhood: the transformation of identity-oriented foreign policy

Thus, the removal of Nasser from power was associated with struggles of power and the consistency and vectors of the implementation of the domestic and foreign policy of Egypt. In this political context, the new president, Anwar Sadat, eliminated the Nasserites who demanded collective leadership. This was unacceptable for him, and he opted to monopolize the foreign policy and to consolidate his political decisions. At the same time, he changed Egypt's foreign policy guidelines, abandoning the idea of a pan-Arab identity. Sadat positioned patriotism as a political goal of his rule in the name of ensuring favourable conditions for economic liberalization in order to attract foreign capital. Sadat's leadership style was called by his advisers the rule of the "lonely pharaoh"²⁷, due to his unwillingness to read reports and analysis and to his penchant for unexpected decisions, which made his foreign policy unpredictable.

²⁶ Nasser, *The Philosophy of the Revolution*, 69.

²⁷ Karawan, "Sadat," 260.

After the end of the October War of 1973, Egypt's foreign policy was determined by a rapprochement with the United States and a reconciliation with Israel. Thus, a choice was made in favour of a political settlement with emphasis on the interests of Egypt, without considering the interests of other countries of the Arab world²⁸. Sadat's regime exploited growing war weariness to find a balance between state and social preferences²⁹. But Sadat did not take into account the fact that Egyptian society was not yet ready for reconciliation and did not seek to develop relations with the former adversary. This led to a weakening of the role and influence of Egypt in the Arab world and to the removal of the president himself.

The above analysis indicates that the Egyptian elite, in the course of the implementation of two extreme vectors of identity, led the Egyptian society to a dead end. The next president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, faced the difficult task of eliminating the accumulated contradictions and the society felt a desire to achieve a political balance. Therefore, Mubarak sought to create a state identity that would include elements of the vision of the two former presidents. Mubarak tried to restore Egypt's reputation by supporting Arab countries, especially the Palestinians, even at the expense of reducing cooperation with the United States and Israel. The emphasis was on "Egypt's inherent belonging to the Arab world"³⁰. At the same time, it was argued that "the Arab-Egyptian rapprochement will not prevent Egypt from maintaining peace"³¹. These slogans and wishes did not correct the situation. In addition, one of the consequences of Mubarak's policy was the increased influence in the region of other regional powers like Turkey, Iran, and the monarchies of the Persian Gulf. In the context of growing contradictions in the relations of elites, of the deteriorating foreign policy conditions, and of the falling status of the country, Mubarak was accused of incompetence, which was aggravated by his advanced age³². Most Egyptians shared the opinion that Mubarak's regime didn't serve the interests of the country, but the interests of Tel Aviv, Riyadh, and Washington³³. Therefore, the new ruling elites were expected to revise the country's foreign policy, adopting a more independent and assertive one.

²⁸ Telhamy, *Identity and Foreign Policy*, 102-110.

²⁹ Telhamy, *Identity and Foreign Policy*, 102-110.

³⁰ Shalaby, "Egypt's Foreign Policy," 110.

³¹ Ahmadian, "Egyptian Foreign Policy Identities," 13-21.

³² Sabet, "Geopolitics of Identity," 75.

³³ Philippe Droz-Vincent, *The Role of the Military in Arab Transitions* (Toulouse: Institute of Political Studies, 2012), 71.

The transformational processes of the “Arab Spring”, in the early 2010s, led to the adjustment of the domestic and foreign policy of Egypt. Before coming to power, the Muslim Brotherhood announced that they would undertake major changes in foreign policy: they would stop the normalization of relations with Israel, revise the Camp David Agreement, and reduce the dependence on the United States. They expressed dissatisfaction with Egypt’s declining influence both regionally and globally³⁴. Although one year of Mohammed Morsi’s rule is not enough to assess the orientation and results of his foreign policy, the continuity with Mubarak’s is obvious. Thus, after his election, Morsi announced that Egypt would remain committed to its international obligations and treaties, including the peace treaty with Israel. The Islamists emphasized the obligatory nature of the peace treaty referring to the Koran³⁵. Responsibly, the Morsi government, which grew out of the Islamist movement, faced contradictions between old positions and new realities, because to stabilize the economy Egypt needed predictable relations with foreign the world.

The transformation of Egypt’s identity-oriented foreign policy in the spirit of the Muslim Brotherhood was evidenced in the efforts to achieve regional leadership³⁶. Egypt sought to strengthen relations with countries where parties and movements ideologically or organizationally close to the Muslim Brotherhood were in power, to form a “Egypt-Turkey-Qatar-Sudan-Tunisia” regional axis. But this diplomatic geometry was greeted with caution, because it was not beneficial to all participants and observers. But Morsi could not achieve full control over the main instruments of foreign policy, since the army retained its independence, and the special services and other structures opposed the desire of the Muslim Brotherhood for hegemony. Also, employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs secretly resisted the attempts of the new rulers of Egypt to take certain positions. As noted by Nabil Fahmi, former minister of foreign affairs, Morsi was more concerned with the politics, priorities, and the discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood than with the presidency³⁷.

The sixth president of Egypt in 2014 was the political and military leader Abdul Fattah Said Hussein Khalil al-Sisi, who played a central role in the 2013 military coup that overthrew the previous president, Mohammed Morsi. According to

³⁴ Gamal M. Selim, “Egyptian Foreign Policy after the 2011 Revolution: The Dynamics of Continuity and Change,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 1 (2020): 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1747983>; Oleksii Kulikov, “Best Practices in the Prevention of Recidivism—Current State and Foreign Experience,” *Journal of International Legal Communication* 3 (2021): 92-101, <https://doi.org/10.32612/iuw.27201643.2021.3.pp.92-101>

³⁵ Kulikov, “Best Practices”, 92-91.

³⁶ Grimm, “Egyptian Foreign Policy,” 2-3.

³⁷ Ahmadian, “Egyptian Foreign Policy Identities,” 22.

al-Sisi, the country needs to change its image so that instead of a religiously oriented revolutionary state, a “new Egypt” enters the international arena, ready to respond to political, economic, and security challenges, and in which each citizen has a multi-layered identity³⁸. An important step in this direction was the approval of the National Sustainable Development Plan “Egypt Vision 2030”, which proclaimed the main national goals: modernization and reform. It also envisaged an active civic position and the participation of all sectors of society in the development of the country. Close attention is paid to issues of empowerment and opportunity, equality, and social justice. Uncertainty about the political future burdened the public discourse in Egypt. In these circumstances, al-Sisi put forward three concepts: 1) Egyptian politics should deal with the management of the country’s human and material wealth; 2) it is necessary to abandon isolationism, and instead strengthen the alliance with the states of the Persian Gulf with the prospect of creating a regional security system; 3) it’s time to stop obsessing about the past, and focus on the future. Egypt has a long history of authoritarian rule, so it is impossible to separate national identity from foreign policy.

Conclusions

The foregoing gives grounds to assert that the “Ibn Khaldun's law” formulated above includes the most negative scenario leading to the disintegration and change of the ruling group. At the same time, the actions of the rulers aimed at asserting and demonstrating their power and prosperity are, up to a certain point, adequate compensatory responses. To an extent there is an increase in external and internal legitimacy. But such an extension of the stability in the face of changes in various factors begins to provoke conflicts, crises, and the collapse of the system. According to Al Khaldoun, this is the effect of the switching ties. The broadest powers of the president of the country in conducting foreign policy predetermine the exclusive influence of the personal factor on it. As shown in this paper, the development of identity through the redefinition of national interests set the direction of Egypt’s foreign policy, so that any transformation of identity at the level of the ruling elites changed it. In other words: since identities define interests, which in turn shape foreign policy, the fundamental change in Egyptian foreign policy can be traced to a change in identity. Despite these limitations, the example of Egypt shows that factors of political identity, such as the role of the leader, are extremely important in shaping the country's foreign policy, although they are not decisive in each case.

³⁸ O. Winter and A. Shiloah, “Egypt’s Identity during the el-Sisi Era: Profile of the ‘New Egyptian’,” *Strategic Assessment* 2, no. 4 (2019): 65-78.

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