

# The Culture and Nationalism of the Arab World: In a Historical Perspective

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**Abstract:** Arabic culture. Before Islam, known to the period of ignorance, there was a belief in jinn, spirits, and ghosts. The habit of drinking wine, gambling, prostitution, theft, robbery, and fights. The purpose of this study is to reveal Arab cultures during the period of ignorance, medieval and explain Arab nationalism in the Middle East. In qualitative research methodologies, there are various commonly used data/resource collection methods. Literature method is one of the data collection methods used in social research methodology to trace historical data. Materials may have published notes, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, letters, films, diaries, Literature, articles, and the like. Culture and Medieval Arab Civilization. In Arab Islamic civilization has a foundation, namely Hellenistic and Iranian Arabic civilization developed under the support of the caliph and expressed in Arabic. Arab nationalism. Indeed, the idea of nationalism has existed long ago, since the existence of human society. This paper provides an overview of the situation and condition of the Arab community of *Jahiliyah*, the morals of the Arab nation. Arab customs and culture prefer idol worship. Arabs have unique morals that no other country has, such as; Prostitution or adultery among men or women by the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam was a common practice, not to the extent that the low level of the person doing the work.

**Keywords:** The Civilizations of the Arab World, the Age of *Jahiliyah*, Culture, and History

## 1. Introduction

As stated by [1], that culture is a complex that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and other abilities and habits gained by human beings as members of society. Or there is also a simple definition as mentioned by [2], that the culture is all the work, taste, and creation of social.

According to [3], culture can view as the backdrop of a humane, normative for a particular group, and which gives birth to a specific lifestyle that is typically and meaningfully different from that of the other, which is the backdrop for the manifestation of human behavior and work, for the realization of a characteristic lifestyle. So that all practice and human actions reflect the culture that influenced him.

Culture has some elements that makeup it. Seven aspects of a universal religion are language, knowledge system, social organization, technological system, economic system, religious system, and art. Each component of culture is incarnate in *Riga* form. Namely as ideas, ideas, values, norms, regulations and so on; patterned activities and actions; as well as objects of work [4].

Many theories proposed to seek and identify nationalism with language, culture, race, politics, earth sciences, economics or religion. To is a factor that aids the formation of national consciousness. So far nothing has been impossible or magical about nationalism. Some claim that patriotism is a consciousness of the soul. Patriotism is a belief, embraced by a large number of individual human beings so that they form a "nationalism"; nationalism is a sense of community togetherness as a "Nation" [5]. While the "nation" here depicted in the minds of its adherents, as the people or people who join and composed in one government and abide together in a particular area.

The term nationalism has two concepts: the doctrine of loving the nation and the state itself and the consciousness of membership in a country that potentially or together attains, defend, and perpetuate the identity, integrity, prosperity, and power of the state. Thus, nationalism means expressing the superiority of a group based on common language, culture, and territory. National and national terms, derived from Latin meaning "born in," sometimes overlap with words derived from Greek, ethnic. This latter time is usually used to refer to culture, language, and offspring outside the political context [6].

Arab culture in the time of *Jahiliyah* has had such customs; belief in the spirits (jinn and ghosts), they hold that the djinn can benefit and resist harm [7].

Belief in the enchanter and the Kahin. They think that the Karim seen as a handyman who can make an antidote or a talisman to reject the catastrophe, can proclaim the impending obligation, where asking for the cause of the trouble that has been and will come, can give clues to cause things desired, and who can decide cases that occur between the people who fight [8].

The beliefs of superstition, among others, they are convinced that whoever denounces or berates *Laata'* or *Uzza'* will get a sickness, if they are to travel long distances, let them bind a conclusion to one of the trees; if they come back, then the end saw first. If it happens to be open, it indicates that his wife has been oblique during the abandonment of traveling.

## 2. Method

In qualitative research methodologies, there are various commonly used data/resource collection methods. According to [9], there are at least four data collection strategies with multi-method in qualitative research, i.e., by participant observation, in-depth interviews, literature studies and

artifacts, and complementary techniques.

According to [10], that the literature method is one of the data collection methods used in social research methodology to trace historical data. While [11], states that Literature is a record of past events in the form of writing, drawing, or monumental works of a person.

The literary method or study, although initially rarely noticed in qualitative research methodologies, today becomes one of the most important and inseparable parts of qualitative research methodology [12]. To is due to the growing awareness and new understanding in the researchers, that a lot of data stored in the form of literature and artifacts. So that the extracting of data sources through literature study become complementary to the qualitative research process. Even [10], states that the credibility level of a qualitative research result at least determined by the use and utilization of existing literature.

In the present literature, research uses the type of research literature analysis/content analysis. Document analysis/content analysis is a study that focuses on the analysis or interpretation of written materials based on the context [13].

Materials may have published notes, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, letters, films, diaries, Literature, articles, and the like. To obtain high credibility, literature researchers must be confident that the Literature is authentic. This type of research can also explore the thoughts of a person in the published book or Literature. Educators use this research method to assess the level of readability of a text or to determine the level of achievement of understanding of a particular topic of a document [14].

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Culture in the Arab World

The Arab population lived nomadic, sedentary because the land made up of desert sand and very little rain. Their migration from one place to another follows the growth of steppes or grasslands growing sporadically in the Arab lands around an oasis or puddle after rainfall [15]. Meadows needed by the Arabs also called *badawah*, or Bedouin nations to shepherd livestock such as sheep, camels, and horses as their pre-eminent beasts.

As for coastal populations in spite of the minority-they live in permanent living with farming and trading. Therefore this had time to cultivate various cultures, even the kingdom [16].

The main characteristics of the pre-Islamic Arabian order are as follows: (a) they embrace tribal ideology (*qabilah*), (b) they have a closed social-political order with limited citizen participation, heredity is more important than ability, c) the position of women tends to lower, this can see from two cases: first, a woman can be inherited, like a stepmother willing to be made a wife by her stepson when her husband dies; the stepmother does not have the right to vote, whether

to accept or reject it; and secondly, women did not gain inheritance [17].

Regarding the management order of society, pre-Islamic Arabs apparently already have organigram structures of positions in the maintenance of Ka'bah as held by Qushayy Ibnu Qilab in the middle of the V century AD to maintain the Kaaba. Also, there are also other structures, namely: al-Siyar, Thjirul Amwal, al-Shura, al-ansyaq, Al-'Iqab, Al-Qubat, and As-Safarat [18].

In this section, it will explain briefly how pre-Islamic Arabic culture. It turns out that from several pre-Islamic Arabic cultures, Arab culture originated from the traditions they preserved from their ancestors, besides their customs also concerning conditions and competition in an area they occupy and to answer the challenges of their time, as well external influences also influence the culture. Culture is what cannot separate from civilized human beings. So that the Arabs, as an educated Arab nation, formed a religion in the Arabian Peninsula that had a variety of cultures, which concerned the Arabs' custom at the time [7]. But the culture at that time was more popular, often referred to as *Jahiliyah* culture.

Islam then comes coloring Arab *Jahiliyah* culture this. But before Islam was present in the Arabian Peninsula, of course, *Jahiliyah* culture also participated in influencing the process of spreading Islamic teachings [16]. And so, on the contrary, Islam also impacts and improves the wrong perceptions that ignorant Arab people used to be better than ever.

The pre-Islamic Arabian culture is full of different lifestyles. The aberrations are due to some fundamental factors, namely: because they have not had the messengers to follow as typical examples, and have no scripture as a guide. Therefore, the Arab community before knowing Islam, always in the dark in search of his life purpose. So that emerging cultures correspond to what they think of lust, and what they want to do. The give rise to various cultures of concern so-called the age of ignorance [19]. Also, geographical conditions also affect the character of this Arab nation.

Local Arabic culture also affects the process of spreading Islamic teachings. The birth of Islam during Arabs with its diverse cultures, thus providing an obstacle in its spreading. Islam tries to take courage in spreading the teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad through his *dakwah*, although many fights against his existence [19]. But with sincerity, in spreading Islam can get success and glory.

The development of culture after knowing Islam, experiencing renewal to the better cultures. With the rules taught by Islam, the Arab community succeeded in building its people, who had been in a downturn but could rise with the changes that Islam taught. And give moral and moral improvement to a better direction [16].

New findings that did not list in the discussion, about pre-Islamic Arab culture. Apparently, the Arabs at that time had a habit in the field of music art in singing songs, such as anthem, the song of praise, and song for greeting. The

custom is thought to have originated from the Christians who later resided in the Arabian Peninsula because the Christians whose passions sang spiritual songs [20].

Before the arrival of Islam in Arabia, the conditions in the Arabian Peninsula were in a state of disrepair. Damage in question is the destruction of morals, as well as the creed of those who reject the unity of God. For example, as their culture worship idols they make, make a wife belong together, kill newborn girls, drink liquors, believe in predictions and commit adultery. This habit established because of the absence of regulating in their lives and also not yet understand much the purpose of good life [7]. The Arabs at that time did not have anyone who set an example to govern their lives, and because of many other factors that did not support how to live well.

The ancestors of the Arabs started as Prophet Ibrahim, who descended from Sam bin Nuh. At first the Arabs had followed the teachings of Prophet Ibrahim as and continued by Prophet Ismail. But over time when they neglected and belied the lessons that brought the Prophet Ibrahim, that is where the is beginning of the descendants of the Arabs. The descendants of Bani Qathan were the native Arabs where they were in the Arabian Peninsula, whereas the Bani Adnan were Arabs who took Arabic as their language. Bani Adnan was a descendant of Prophet Ismail bin Ibrahim, and Prophet Muhammad SAW was the descendant of Adnan [7]. The means that the Arabs divided into two breeds namely Bani Qathan and Bani Adnan. Thus, the Prophet Muhammad was the sons of Adnan descendants of Prophet Ismail bin Ibrahim.

Before discussing the history of Islamic civilization, it's right first to explain pre-Islamic Arabs. The history of pre-Islamic Arabia describes a sequence of tales interconnected with one another. So, it can provide more easily understood information about Arab and Islamic history. Arabs before the advent of Islam often called the ignorant nation of ignorance. But on the other hand, the Arabs are the ones who have raised the religion of Islam. Islam first descended and flourished in Arabia, the development of the Islamic faith to date that we know is inseparable from the participation of the Arab nation [5]. The became something that attracted the Arabs formerly against the presence of Islam, on the other hand, the Arabs are also fighting for Islam itself. So, the history of the pre-Islamic Arabic story becomes interesting to discuss.

Arab culture at that time was a legacy that lowered by its ancestors. From generation to generation, the culture grew from age to age, most of the Arab cultures deemed inhuman. There are several reasons for causing them, so they do so because 1) Because they are in a state of ignorance in ignorance, 2) they follow the habits of their elders [6]. Therefore, the Arabs do inhumane things, without their knowledge following the practices of their former people is an evil deed. So, the Arabs in error they follow from their false ancestors.

Pre-Islamic Arabs, identical with the ignorant nation. The ignorance regarded as an underdeveloped and inhumane nation. The term ignorance, usually defined as a period of

innocence or primitive life. But in truth, what the *jahiliyah* meant was that at that time the Arabs had no legal authority, prophets, and scriptures [7]. The definition implies that what is expected by ignorance is related to the condition of the Arab nation at that time, which has no rules governing their lives. So, the growth of ignorance often associated with the age of innocence, inhuman and cruel.

At first, the Arabs embraced the monotheistic religion brought by Prophet Ibrahim. As time goes by, there are changes in their beliefs, which then occur deviations in their divine teachings, which then they make the idols for them to worship. The icons are like the deity of a statue, a tree and even a supernatural creature like a genie. Images are objects in the form of living things or objects revered, worshiped, adored and made by human hands [20]. Something that the Arabs worshiped in living beings such as trees and jinn, as well as inanimate objects they made and praised, such as statues or rocks. So much of the many pagan beliefs they do.

In addition to idolatry, the Arabs at that time also worshiped the gods. The gods they perceive exist. Like the gods of the people of Mecca and Madinah, Latta and Uzza, for example, are more popular among them as gods for their worship. Among the Hijaz urban communities, of which only 17 percent of the Hijaz people, the stage of the religion of heavenly bodies emerged long ago. Al- 'Uzza, al-Lat and Manat, i.e., three daughters of God have a sacred place of worship [9], The belief in worshipping the gods was one of the Arab ideas at the time. The means that the religion of the gods, merely taking part in the land of the Hijaz, so they make sacred places for the worship of the god they worship.

Worship of the sun and moon also occurred during the time of *jahilliyah*. The faith of Mass of the heavenly bodies happened in the Arabian Peninsula long before Islam was present. Like for example Bedouin people whose beliefs centered on the moon. The tradition of worshipping the moon implies a herding society, while the culture of praying for the sun represents the next stage, that of the agricultural community [21]. By means that cattle herd societies and agrarian communities worship heavenly bodies as their offerings are a habit they often do. Such worshipping beliefs become a diversity in the form of trust that once existed in the Arabian Peninsula.

Geographical Arabian Peninsula is a strategy for trade routes, making the Arabs smart regarding trade. Before Islam came, Arabs who were one of the livelihoods apart from raising, they also traded. Usually, those who sell their merchandise, by shifting places taking merchandise from Yemen brought to Mecca, then some of them sold to Sham, and vice versa. Trade is a crucial success index reached by southern Arabs [15]. To means, they already know breakroom in managing merchandise because they have been practicing ways of exporting goods and import goods from one area to another. So, they said to have succeeded in launching economic activity in their field and is supposed to be the primary index of sustainability in the Arab region.

The ignorant nation is also a warlike nation, and they have trained in it. Knowledge of warfare also needed to safeguard when there is tribal warfare. Tribal warfare often occurs in



the Arabian arena, so that Arabs will guard and prepare troops if their tribe attacked by other tribes in conflict. Like, for example, they learn ways to use swords, how to shoot and shrewdness on horseback. Even the means of the war made to demonstrate their expertise in the contests, who considered the most skilled among those who follow the race, to show their pride. Fighting for Arab society is a good thing to defend their tribes [22]. For the Arabs, warfare must prepare before their tribe attacked by other tribes, and preparation for the battle is something that they consider a good thing. Therefore, they will inevitably have to follow that condition, to survive in the arena of the Arabian Peninsula full of competition.

Arabs have long been familiar with the knowledge of astronomy. The circumstances of those who live in the desert and their love of the stars, make them a hobby in learning the science of astrology. For example, to know the rising and setting of the sun, also to see the turn of the season. The Kaidan (Babylon) where the world's teachers of astronomy when the Persian army invaded the land of Babylon, some of them including astronomers fleeing to the Arab areas, of whom the Arabs studied science [13]. The influence of other nations can also accept by Arabs, especially in science. To make a habit of the Babylonians influence the Arabs to learn it.

The Arab people are very appreciative of those who are good at making up poems. In composing and listening to verses sung by the author of poetry, has become a habit of Arab society. For example, telling about the rural community, the stories of the ancients or the poems of praise. The peak of Arab culture precisely departs from its ability that is not violent, i.e., speaking spoken [14]. The ability to speak can replace physical warfare, that is, they compete to make up and make poems. To respected and respected by the Arabs, it makes them accustomed to fighting in composing good songs.

The Arabs highly appreciate the value of literature and beauty in the hymn poetry. They measure one's intelligence based on how beautiful and exciting it is to chant poetry poems. Poet in addition to being the spokesperson of his people, also profoundly understand the folktales, besides that, as a study of social development, guidance and as an operator. Therefore there is a proverb saying, "poetry is a public record (diwan) of Arabs" [15]. Poet poets other than referred to as historians also referred to as scientists and news conveyors. Arabic poetry poems at that time were Arab memories of a story, which sing to the public, thus becoming a record for the society of an event that had taken place.

The Arabian tradition of ignorance who likes to make sculptures is one of the beautiful arts of the Arabs at that time. In making idols, the Arabs made it not only for them to worship, but also, they did love to make the statue. The Arabs at that time were well known for making sculptures; even each tribe had their idols of each other for their worship. The icons usually made of stone and wood. Some of the inhabitants of the Arab lands did not consider the god idols, but as a mediation [16]. There is a mixture of a mix between them worshipping it or just as their penchant for making a statue, so it said to be a mediation. So many of the

figures they leave behind, without them functioning as idols to their gods.

### 3.2 Nationalism in the Arab World

The Arabs formed through the gradual formation of Arabic as the language of communication and with the advent of Islam as the religion and culture of the region. Both Arab and Islam served as the pillars of the nation. According to [17], Arab nationalism is "Arab of their special characteristic awareness as well as their efforts to build a modern state capable of representing the common will of the nation and all its constituent parts." In the Arab nationalist movement three distinctions: Arabs, Arab nationalism, and pan-Arab unity. Jamil al-Sayyid, the founder of the Arab nationalist Baath party, claims a nation is a group of Arabic-speaking people, inhabiting the Arab world, and who has the same state-owned feelings. Nationalism is the "total number" of characteristics and qualities exclusive to the Arabs, while the pan-Arab union is a modern notion that Arab states should be able to unite separate ones to form one country under one political system. Local patriotism centered on individual Arab nations incorporated into the framework of Arab nationalism beginning in the 1920s. To done by placing the Arabian Peninsula as the homeland of the Semites (the Canaan and Syriacs of the Levant and Assyria and Babylon of Mesopotamia) who migrated throughout the Middle East in ancient times or by linking other pre-Islamic cultures, such as the Egyptians and North Africa and the Horn of Africa, became a growing Arab identity.

Modern Arabic has two different words that can translate into English as "nationalism": *qawmiyya*, derived from the word *qawm* meaning ethnic, ethnic, and *wataniyya* meaning, derived from the word *watan* means state land, native. This word *qawmiyya* has been used to refer to pan-Arab nationalism, while *wataniyya* has been used to refer to patriotism at a more local level (sometimes belittled as "regionalism" by those who regard pan-Arabism the only true form of Arab nationalism) [16]. Throughout the late 19th century, it began in the 1860s, a sense of loyalty to the "Land" developed among intellectuals based in the Levant and Egypt, but not necessarily "Arab Land." The developed from adherence to the success of Western European technology that they attributed to the prevailing patriotism in the countries. During this period, the heavy influx of Christian missionaries and educators from Western countries provided what called the rise of "Arab politics," resulting in the formation of secret societies within the empire. In the 1860s, literature produced in the Mashreq (the eastern Mediterranean region and Mesopotamia) under Ottoman control at the time, there was an emotional intensity and strongly condemned the Ottoman Turks for "betraying Islam" and Land to Christian West. In the patriotic Arabic view, Islam is not always in a "sad state" and states that the military triumph and the triumph of the Arab culture of religious arrival, insist that European modernism itself is of Islamic origin. The Arabs, on the other hand, have deviated from true Islam and thus experienced a decline.

In 1911, Muslim intellectuals and politicians from all Levants formed Al-Fatat (Young Arab Society), a small

Arab nationalist club, in Paris. The stated aim is "to raise the level of Arabs to the level of modern nations." In the first few years of existence, Al-Fatat called for greater autonomy within the Ottoman state united rather than Arab independence from the empire. Al-Fatat hosted the 1913 Arab Congress in Paris, whose goal was to discuss desired reforms with other agreeable individuals from the Arab world [23]. They also requested that the Arab army for the Ottoman military not asked to serve in non-Arab areas except in wartime. However, as the Ottoman government cracked down on organizational activities and members, Al-Fatat moved underground and demanded the full independence and unity of the Arab province.

Individual nationalists became more prominent during the waning years of Ottoman authority, but the idea of Arab nationalism hardly impacted on most Arabs because they considered themselves 13 faithful subjects from the Ottoman Empire. The British for their part incited the Sharif of Mecca to emit the Arab Uprising during the First World War. The Ottomans defeated, and the rebel forces, loyal to Sharif's son Faysal bin al-Husain entered Damascus in 1918. Now, Faysal along with many Iraqi intellectuals and military officers have joined Al-Fatat which will form the backbone of the newly created Arab country composed of many Levant and Hijaz [24]. Damascus became the center of coordination of the Arab nationalist movement because it seen as the birthplace of ideology, the first sovereign Arab-Faysal seat "sovereign" after nearly 400 years of Turkish sovereignty- and because of the entire Mashreq nationalist region that was familiar to it. Nonetheless, Jerusalem, Beirut, and Baghdad remain a significant base of support. After the creation of the Faysal state, severe tensions in the Arab nationalist movement became visible; conflicts between the ideologically highest ideals form a single independent unit consisting of all countries that share Arabic language and inheritance, and a tendency to prioritize local ambitions [25].

For further tension, a rift formed between older nationalist members from various Syrian cities-the more affluent class and nationalist families became close to Faysal-his army of Hijazi, Iraqi and Syrian military officers, and Palestinian and Syrian intellectuals. The old guard primarily represented by Ridha Pashaal-Rikabi, who served as Faysal's prime minister, while the young guard did not have a single leader. However, the youths in Al-Fatat founded the Arab Liberation Party "Al-Istiqlal" in February 1919. The aim was to achieve complete unity and Arab independence. Leading members include Izzat Darwaza and Shukri al-Quwatli [23].

Headquartered in Damascus with branches across towns across the Levant, Al-Istiqlal receives political and financial support from Faysal but relies on Al-Fatat's inner circle for survival. During the war, Britain had been a significant sponsor of Arab nationalist thought and ideology, primarily as a weapon against the forces of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Arab army promised a country that encompassed more of the Arabian Peninsula and the secret Fertile Crescent of the Sykes-Picot Agreement between England and France provided for the division of territory from much of that region between the two imperialist powers [24]. During the inter-year war and the British Mandate period, when the Arab lands were under the rule of France

and Britain, Arab nationalism became an essential anti-imperial movement against the opposition of European power.

From the above explanation, it can conclude that Arab nationalism in the Middle East region is a point of progress for Arabs as well as for Islam. Because Arab countries are always identical and connected with Islam. Therefore, most of his resurrection pioneered by Islamic figures.

Arab nationalism also supported by neighboring countries in the Middle East and other countries' figures. But there are many oppositions from others as well as from western nations.

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of the situation and condition of the Arab community of *Jahiliyah*, the morals of the Arab nation. Arab customs and culture prefer idol worship. Though they believe in God Almighty. Arabs have different morals that no other country has, such as; Prostitution or adultery among men or women by the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula before Islam was a common practice, not to the extent that the low level of the person doing the work. Prostitution in a transparent manner not allowed, but one may do so in a closed fashion. The prostitute girls openly open a prostitution stall and for the sign they put a flag in front of each house.

Children born of unlawful women were, at that time, seen as legitimate children, as children acquired from legal marriages. A woman may surrender herself to a handsome and robust man or nobility to mixed up so that her child can later imitate or be like the father of his loan. The terrible job considered a casual affair, seen as nothing. Some men (less than ten people), both visit and interfere with a woman, like a joint wife. Then when the woman is pregnant and gives birth to the child of the mixed mingle, the woman summons all, and to the man must accept and be the father of her child.

Other Arab Morals, Dirtiness in Eating and Drinking In the affairs of eating and drinking for the Arabs at that time it can say that nothing is forbidden because nothing considered dirty and disgusted. All kinds of animals can have eaten. Animals that died alone or carcass eaten. Animals alive sliced and burned and consumed by the flesh. Animals who killed because they are beaten too. Also among them, there are those who like to drink animal blood and eat frozen plasma.

Throughout the history of Islam, there has never been any conflict between the religious leaders and the rulers of the government. The purpose of the obligation to uphold the law, the state and the power on earth is to carry out God's commands, while those deviating from that goal must oppose.

Arabic Culture The period of ignorance, belief in superstition. Moral Arab Nations. Drinking Gambling, prostitution, theft and robbery, cruelty. Defilements in the affairs of eating and drinking, lacking Decency, quarrels, and fights.

Culture and Medieval Arab Civilization. In Arab Islamic civilization has a foundation, namely Hellenistic and Iranian Arabic civilization developed under the support of the caliph and expressed in Arabic. Arab nationalism. Indeed, the idea of nationalism has existed long ago, since the existence of human society. But at that time patriotism still called fanaticism or *Ashabiah*. For it is *Ashabiah* who acts as a unifying member of a tribe that became the forerunner of nationalism.

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