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Araştırma Makalesi ● Research Article

The Social Construction of a 'Pan-Arab Hero': Gamal Abdel Nasser

Bir 'Pan-Arap Kahramanın' Sosyal İnşası: Cemal Abdülnasır

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MAKALE BİLGİSİ

ÖZ

Bu makale, Cemal Abdülnasır'ın pan-Arap kimliğinin inşasını sosyal inşacı kuramsal bir yaklaşımla araştırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Nasır'ın sembolik siyaseti akıllıca manipüle ederek, sosyal ve politik olarak bağlayıcı normlar oluşturup ve nihayetinde o normlar tarafından kısıtlanarak pan-Arap milliyetçiliğinin bir kahramanı olarak nasıl inşa edildiği konusunu incelemektedir. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma kuramsal bir yaklaşım olarak sosyal inşacılığın açıklayıcı gücünü Nasır'ın siyasi hareketlerini ve nedenlerini anlama ve açıklamada rasyonalizmin açıklayıcı gücü ile kıyaslama yaparak incelemektedir. Rasyonalizm, Nasır'ın gücünün onun ekonomik ya da askeri becerilerinden değil, olayları tarihsel bir hikâye anlatısı içinde çerçevelendirerek yeni Arap normları oluşturmasından geldiğini yeterli seviyede açıklayamamaktadır. Nasır mutlak maddi milli çıkarlarına karşı olmasına rağmen, Birleşik Arap Cumhuriyet'inin kurulmasında, 1962 Kuzey Yemen İç Savaşı'nda ve 1967'de gerçekleşen Altı Gün Savaşı'nda önde gelen liderdi. Bu makale, söz konusu teorilerin her bir dönemi açıklamadaki gücünü incelemek için söylemleri ve olayları kronolojik olarak inceleyerek Nasır Arabizminin milliyetçi yükseliş ve düşüşünü analiz etmektedir.

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the construction of Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arab identity from a social constructivist theoretical approach. In this sense, it scrutinizes how Nasser came to be constructed as a pan-Arab hero by cleverly manipulating the symbolic politics and establishing socially and politically binding pan-Arab norms and eventually made himself constrained by them. This study also examines social constructivism's explanatory power as a theoretical model in understanding and explaining Nasser's political motives and moves by comparing it with that of rationalism. It is argued that Nasser's power did not come from economic or military capabilities, as rationalism fails to explain, but his power came from his ability to frame the events within a historical narrative in such a rhetorical way to establish new Arab norms. He was the leading figure in the establishment of the United Arab Republic, the North Yemen Civil War and The Six-Day War of 1967, despite all were against his and Egypt's absolute material national interests. This article analyzes the path to nationalist ascent and descent of Nasser's Arabism by chronologically scrutinizing on the discourses and events in order to examine the power of the given theories in explaining each period.

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Introduction

Egypt's second elected president Gamal Abdel Nasser had emerged as a leading political leader in the twentieth century Middle East called as the 'hero of the Arab nation' (Gordon, 2006). There have been many scholarly works studying *Nasserism,* his political ideology, his leadership, and his pan-Arabism in that either he was classified as a purely pragmatist Egyptian nationalist or a true pan-Arabist (Hinnebusch, 2005; Fawcett, 2005; Vatikiotis, 1978; Stephens, 1971; Dekmejian, 1971). Drawing on the work of Jankowski (2002) *Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism and the United Arab Republic*, for example, Hinnebusch (2002) argues that he does not provide any new theoretical or empirical evidence about the Nasser period but builds on what we already know about the period and includes new details (p.1). Although in his article, *Arab Nationalism in "Nasserism" and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958*, Jankowski (1997) proposes a loose realist like theoretical picture, he argues that Nasser was a pragmatist mostly benefiting from discourse analysis for that period, the article cannot be argued as pretentious in terms of its theoretical basis. In another work, Hinnebusch (2005) examined the role of the identity within the Middle Eastern context concentrating specifically on pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism applying utilitarian theories and constructivism, as the work was more of a general discussion about identity issues in the Middle East, it sheds a pale light on the Nasserist period. Vatikiotis (1978) presents a similar picture, having deeply scrutinized a detailed sketch of the political portrait of Nasser, and his book neglects to further on any theoretical discussions just like Dekmejian (1971). Stephens's (1971) political biography of Nasser can be assumed as following the same path. Dawisha (2003) examines Arab nationalism in his work *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* with a smooth application of nationalist theories, as Malik Mufti (1996) did in his book *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* focusing on Syrian and Iraqi cases. By deepening in constructivist discussions Barnett (1998) presents a very sound analysis of Arab politics and Arabism in his striking book *Dialogues in Arab Politics: Negotiations in Regional Order* stressing the regional dynamics by reserving more than two chapters for the Nasserite period because of its importance in leading the Arab politics.

Drawing on the works of the existing literature, the main purpose of this article is to offer an analytical framework to analyze the most important period in the history of modern pan-Arabism, the Nasserite period, through measuring the explanatory power of constructivism, and so, the power of the ideational factors. What is new about this study is that although there are many works about Nasser and pan-Arabism as summarized above, most of them lacked a theoretical background and the ones that have just comprised the nationalist theories or a loose constructivist debate without utilizing from one of the most important methods of constructivism, the discourse analysis. This article discusses that, Nasser, being a strong Egyptian nationalist, was involved in the Arab nationalist movement driven by the practical, instrumental and material motives at the beginning with security interests originating from the need of survival, nevertheless, as he is constructed as the leader of pan-Arabism through the interactions during the process, his interests are shaped with the social construction of his identity and his ideological stance that constrained him from behaving according to his absolute material interests in which constructivism can properly explain the situation with its strong emphasis of interests and identities are constructed by testing the power of the ideational factors. In this study, I will analyze the path to nationalist ascent and descent chronologically by scrutinizing the discourses and events in order to examine the power of the given theories in explaining the period.

In the following pages, firstly, the main theory of the article, constructivism will be summarized with a special emphasis on identity, norms and role conceptions. Then, the theory and these concepts will be operationalized through the analysis of discourses and events after

the military takeover by the revolutionary military officers till the passing of Nasser in 1970. The events that have special importance in the development of the pan-Arabic discourse of Nasser and that made Nasser an 'Arab-hero' (Gordon, 2006) is going to be juxtaposed through the means of symbolic exchanges (especially with the potent use of 'Voice of the Arabs') as the Baghdad Pact, Bandung Conference, Czechoslovakian arms deal, Aswan Dam and Suez crisis and war, United Arab Republic (UAR). Last but not least, the events that led to the de-construction of pan-Arabic discourse, namely, the dissolution of the UAR, the Arab summit meetings, interference in the revolt in Yemen in 1962 and 1967 the Six-Day war will also be elaborated.

Explaining the theoretical background

Constructivism, as mostly seen as rationalism's literary opponent, offers a frame of arguments with a special focus on ideas, identities and interests (Walt, 1998, p. 42). In constructivism, it is assumed that "actors acquire identities by participating in collective meanings" (Wendt, 1992, p. 397). Moreover, the identities of the actors are relational since it is always "within a specific, socially constructed world... with its appropriate attachments of psychological reality" (Berger, 1966, p.35). It can be said that the constructivist theories share the same views with the rationalists by assuming 'the identities are the basis of interests' but they differ with their argument that offers "actors do not have a 'portfolio' of interests that they carry around independent of social context" (Wendt, 1992, p. 398). Thus, the interests, and hence the identities of the actors are assumed to be 'socially constructed'. According to March and Olsen (1989):

> human actors are imagined to follow rules that associate particular identities with particular situations, approaching individual opportunities for action by assessing similarities between current identities and choice dilemmas and more general concepts of self and situations. (p. 951)

As constructivism argues, there is a 'rule–guided behavior' of the actors in which they assume to 'do the right thing' but this differs from the 'instrumentally rational behavior' in which the actors are aiming to maximize their interests and optimize their preferences (Risse, 2000, p. 4). As Risse (2000) clearly defines "social constructivism's contribution to the study of ideas in International Relations consists of emphasizing that collective norms and understandings constitute the social identities of actors and also define the social 'rules of the game' in which actors find themselves in their interactions" (p. 5). In other words, with the constitutive effects of norms, rules and institutions, which are based on 'normative rationality', rules not only affect and regulate the behavior of the actors but also define the social identities. Furthermore, the existence of 'others' is a constitutive part of the collective social identification processes, as Delanty (199) states that "the 'We' is defined not by reference to a framework of shared experiences, common goals, and a collective horizon, but by the negation of the 'Other'" (p. 5). As stressed by Friedman (1991), specifically in the early socialization process, the unity of 'us' is determined by *regard de l'autre* (p. 99).

Constructivism's substantial emphasis on identities is significant in the Middle Eastern context that holds various sub, supra and state identities, so it is critical to examine the importance of the factors of identity and discourses over material structures that constitutes the basic debate in rationalist and constructivist discussions (Hinnebush, 2005, p. 152). According to Hinnebush (2005), constructivism is especially relevant to the Middle East with the power of supra-state identities like pan-Arabism over the pursuit of national interests since the territories are arbitrarily drawn (p.152) and there is a common culture, language and religion among the Arabs (Cleveland, 2000). However, according to Walt (1987), in his realist study *The Origins of Alliances* despite the discussions about the uniqueness of Arab politics, pan-Arabism was solely used as an instrument of state power like an army by the states in pursuing

their national interests. However, according to Barnett (1998), a devoted constructivist, what makes pan-Arabism a means of state power is a relatively more significant issue, for him:

> The structure of the Arab politics, a structure defined by social and material elements, represented a source of identity and interests of the Arab states [...] Arab leaders were constrained by and manipulated the norms of Arabism... [T]he norms of Arabism were connected to the regime's various interests, the regimes competed to determine their content. (p. 32)

From this perspective, the normative structure of Arab politics shaped by Arabism and sovereignty leads Arab states to identify themselves as Arabs and lead them to follow pan-Arab supra-national interests rather than their state's national interests. Since events do not have a particular meaning by themselves, Arab leaders frame events by placing them in a narrative and give them particular meanings by providing a link between past, present and future (Barnett, 1998, p.42). The events, actions and discourses in the Nasserite period became the primary tools to mobilize actions within the framing process of placing them in the pan-Arabic history and of constructing a pan-Arab identity.

An Emerging 'Arab Hero'

Egypt is one of the few nation-states in the Middle Eastern region which have its own distinctive history and culture (Hinnebush, 2005; Barnett, 1998). According to Miller (2008), there is the state-to-nation balance in the Egyptian case which is lacking in most of the other Arab states (p. 2), as Kienle (1990) argues Arab world constitutes a system of territorial states but not nation-states. According to Dekmejian (1971), Egyptian nationalism developed far before the development of Arab nationalism in Egypt (p. 93-94). Coming from a humble background, turned back to Egypt after the military fiasco in Palestine, as a strong soldier, Nasser's first concern was Egypt with its bankrupted economy, dissolved state institutions, and insecure environment, but he identified Egyptian nationalism with its Arabic credentials rather than its Mediterranean, Western and even its Islamic character. His "identification with Egypt clearly developed earlier and, at least through the 1950s, took precedence over any Arab affiliation" (Jankowski, 1997, p.155) as it can be inferred from his statement "I am Egyptian. And I feel Arab because I am deeply affected by the fortunes and misfortunes of the Arabs, wherever it may occur" (Quoted in Lacouture, 1973, 190). There have been many arguments about the fact that Nasser began to use the pan-Arabic discourse as a means to realize his own ends (Vatikiotis, 1978; Jankowski, 1997; Dawisha, 2003; Barnett, 1998) which can be assumed as a sound argument due to several reasons. However, it can also be said that he had genuine sympathy for the Arab cause and his personal disposition was inclined toward Arab nationalism which caused his dual perception of Arab nationalism (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 228-229), but in both of his perceptions Egypt was to play a central role.

The July 1952 Revolution by the Free Officers, and most importantly by Nasser among them, Hinnebush (1985) notes, "was a classic case of a Third World movement against imperialism and the delayed dependent development which resulted from it" (p. 11), so the coup can be assumed as a rebellion against Western orientation of the regime, instability, its inability to avoid the 1942 humiliation with the British or 1948 fiasco with Israel (Podeh and Winkcler, 2004, p. 13). After the revolution, as the army group that took over the state after a long colonial history, the primary concern of the Free Officers was the survival of the regime, and due to the ongoing presence of the British bases on the Egyptian territory, their immediate goal was to secure their domestic base, to protect the territorial integrity, and therefore, the Egyptian interests had prominence at that time (Dawisha, 2003, p. 138). Moreover, when the pan-Arabic discourse began to be accommodated in the speeches of Nasser it can be said that it was for the practical and pragmatic concerns emanating from security issues, as he says "Egypt must not live isolated from the rest of the Arabs, because once we are isolated, we shall be defeated separately" (Vatikiotis, 1978, 228). Thus, the use of pan-Arabic discourse

accounted for Nasser's view that "Egypt's fate and security could not be separated from those of the Arab states; and his understanding that unity was the best method for augmenting Egyptian and Arab power" (Kerr, 1972, p. 39-41). In the early years of the Nasserite rule, the various uses of the Arab nationalist statements in which Arab nationalism stated as "the protective armor", "weapon", "principal weapon", "strategic necessity" and "a defensive necessity and common interests" can also be said to be indicative of the practical reasons (Jankowski, 1997, p. 158). Rationalist theories can also be said to have explanatory power for this view since regime survival and security can be assumed as the main and first motive for Nasser since they assume that political actors are primarily interested in pursuing their own interests and anarchy gives the states the survival motive (Reus-Smith, 2009, 216). In 1953, U.S. Secretary of State Dulles offered Nasser a Western alliance. When he rejected, then Dulles was convinced with the idea to look for other Arab countries for forming an alliance (Dawisha, 2003, p. 138). Dawisha (2003) argues that in 1953 when Egypt was threatened by the idea of a Western alliance, "Nasir [*sic.*] began to shift the ideological and political attention of his political order from Egypt to tshe wider Arab world... he decided to subsume Egypt's identity within the overall Arab identity" (p. 139) so as not to be isolated and to be united against the Western alliances. Nasser tried to awaken the anti-imperialist revolutionary potential and reorient Egypt toward the Arab nationalist path (Dawisha, 2003, p.139), which Nasser explained as follows:

> it immediately became clear to us that Egypt, like the rest of the constituent parts of the Arab nation, would not be able to safeguard her security except when grouped with her sister countries in Arabism, in a strong union...Arab nationalism for us acquired the characteristic of both a political doctrine and a strategic necessity (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 229)

According to Walt's balance-of-threat theory (2002) states form alliances to balance against the most serious threats, this can be valid for the Arab states in the Middle East as Western powers and Israel can be assumed to be the common threats to them (p. 133). Thus, Nasser's desire to form alliances with the other Middle Eastern states against the common threat by manipulating the pan-Arabic discourse can be assumed as a sound argument, as he argues in 1957 "our policy is based on Arab nationalism because Arab nationalism is a weapon for every Arab state. Arab nationalism is a weapon employed against aggression" (Jankowski, 1997, p. 4). Nevertheless, constructivism also offers that states have the desire to preserve the material substrate of the agency, which is the organizational apparatus of governance for states and it does not oppose the view that states behave according to their own interests, even agrees with it (Wendt, 1992, p. 402), but rationalism's difference from constructivism emanates from the fact that it accepts interests as exogenously given, nevertheless, for constructivism, "identities are the basis of interests" (Wendt, 1992, p. 398), so they are not given, they can be reconstructed. As a matter of fact, Nasser's rejection of the offer of Dulles can easily be explained through constructivism since despite the alliance's material advantage, he thought that it is against his interests to form an alliance with the U.S. because of ideational matters. Furthermore, according to Ringmar (1996), "we can never come up with a conclusive answer to the question of what we-or anyone else for that matter- 'really are', but this does not for a moment stop us talking about what we or others are like" (p. 75) and identities are constructed in relation to the 'others'. Therefore, in Nasser's case, The West and Israel can be said to be constituting 'others' for all the Arabs to build a common identity upon, as he says that,

> After the siege and battles in Palestine I came home with the whole region in my mind one complete whole… An event may happen in Cairo today; it is repeated in Damascus, Beirut, Amman or any other place tomorrow. This was naturally in conformity with the picture that experience has left within me: One region, the same factors and circumstances, even the same forces opposing them all. (Jankowski, 1997, p. 157)

So, Nasser's Egyptian and also Arab identities required him to take up his position in the pan-Arab cause and his manipulation of pan-Arabic discourse since his interests were driven by his identity constructed against 'the others' which are the imperialist West and Israel, an extension of imperialism in the Arab soil. As argued by Barnett (1998), "Nasser was committed to Arab nationalism, Egypt and himself and that these commitments were not contradictory but in fact could be consistent" (p. 99), since both of the identities requires an anti-colonialist and non-aligned stance for their interests, in which constructivism has explanatory power with its emphasis on identity as the basis of interests.

"Voice of the Arabs"

Fought in the war of Palestine as an Egyptian soldier and humiliated by the defeat as an Arab, Nasser was deeply affected from the misfortunes of the Arab people but his definition of Arab nationalism is evolved over the years with the effects of many incidents. As it is said before, at first being a committed Egyptian nationalist, he believed in Egypt's leadership over the Arab world, as he said that "I don't think of myself as a leader of the Arab world. But the Arab peoples feel that what we do in Egypt reflects their collective hopes and aspirations" (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 229). According to Tarrow (1994), political actors try to mobilize collective action by utilizing cultural symbols selectively picked out from a cultural toolchest and artistically transferred into frames for action (p. 119). Nasser manipulated the past by using examples from history to frame the events according to his position, since he generally projected the imperialists and Israelis as the "modern successors to the Crusaders" (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 229). Furthermore, in his portrayal of potential Arab power, the Kurdish Saladin model was always on the front line and not surprisingly, Saladin was a ruler of Egypt (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 229). In addition to these, he also said that "it seems to me that within the Arab circle there is a role wandering aimlessly in search of a hero" (Quoted in Barnett, 1998, p. 99). Thus, it can be argued that he thought himself of that hero but how this role evolved through the interactions deserves to be investigated. 'Voice of the Arabs', radio broadcasting from Cairo to all of the Arab world, became an important vehicle in developing and evolving of the identities and so the interests of both Nasser on the hand, and the Arab states and the Arab people on the other. (Dawisha, 2003, p. 145) The radio began its broadcasting just two months after Nasser's decline of Dulles's offer, and its daily transmissions grew from thirty minutes in 1953 to approximately twenty-four hours in the 1960s (Douglas, 1999, p. 28). In 1954, the radio was calling all Arab people;

> to stand in one rank in the face of the imperialism, to expel British, to cleanse the land of Arabdom from this plague, to obtain with their own money and to make for themselves arms which will pursue aggression... [T]his, O Arabs, is the policy of Egypt. (Quoted in Jankowski and Gershoni, 1997, p. 160)

Furthermore, according to Podeh, his messages were simply and broadly phrased to captivate all social classes, comprising slogans like "freedom", "social justice", "independence", "anti-imperialism", "anti-Zionism" and "pan-Arabism". (Podeh and Winkcler, 2004, p. 17). For scholars like Dawisha (2003) and Vatikiotis (1978), Nasser had transformed the radio into a powerful propaganda weapon and it played a decisive role in building Egypt's and Nasser's leadership of the Arab nationalist movement and it became very effective such that it became the main agency of instability in the Arab countries such as Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. According to Barnett (1998), the primary feature of Arab politics is that the Arab leaders strived to control the policies of their rivals through the deployment and manipulation of the symbols and the discursive means that formed the normative structure of the Arab politics (p. 33). Thus, it can be said that the radio became the primary means for Nasser to construct his pan-Arab leadership in the region, and a potent tool to construct and de-construct the pan-Arab norms and the normative structure of the Arab politics that one can witness in the following events till 1970.

Baghdad Pact and Czechs Arms Deal

Facing Egypt's rejection of the alliance offer, Dulles turned to Baghdad to form an alliance, being also an Arab nationalist Iraqi President Nuri Al-Said can be said to have a different way of interpreting pan-Arabism that is respectful to the norm of sovereignty (Barnett, 1995, p. 487). In addition to the symbolic threats emanating from the efforts of Nasser to become a hegemon, Nuri Al-Said could not imagine a political power without Western powers, he criticized Nasser as "he failed to understand that the West would not grant the luxury of neutralism, [...] he failed to understand that the Middle East is tied to West economically [...] and Nasser overlooked the military reality of Russia's incapacity to defend the Arabs if they made an enemy of the West" (Stephens, 1971, p. 149). With these motives, the Baghdad Pact was signed between Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Britain with the sponsorship of the U.S. in 1955. (Spiegel, 1985, p. 95). As soon as Nasser learned the formal existence of the Pact, he waged a harsh propaganda campaign against Nuri Al-Said through the "Voice of the Arabs" calling Nuri as a "traitor" to the Arab cause (Dawisha, 2003, p.165). To form a common front against the Baghdad Pact, Nasser organized a meeting with the Arab leaders in Cairo, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon who had been neutral about signing of the Pact but he threatened to propagate against them and suspending relations with them (Heikal, 1986, p. 56-58). While he was trying to prevent the aforementioned countries to join the alliance, an Israel attack took place on a military installation in Gaza, which he claimed was coordinated by the Baghdad Pact causing the eruption of huge protests throughout the Arab world (Barnett, 1998, p. 105). Nasser's strong reaction to the Pact, according to Barnett, emanates from the fact that that kind of an alliance would deteriorate Egypt's standing, leaving it isolated and exposing it alone against Israel (Barnett, 1998, p. 106) in which rationalism has an explanatory power with its emphasis in accepting states as 'egoistic utility maximisers' whose sole aim is to maximize utility in all of their actions and interactions, and the actions are chosen to provide the means to a further end. Thus, in this case, rationalism can sensibly explain Egypt's attack on Iraq and its attempts to prevent the other states from allying with it, but what it cannot explain is how he could do it. Although, as it is mentioned before, being a realist Walt explains the pragmatic use of the pan-Arabic discourse of the Arab leaders to realize their interests, he fails to explain to measure where the normative power comes from and how it can restrain actor behavior.

According to Vatikiotis (1978), to secure his supremacy among the other Arab rulers, Nasser had to articulate his policy of Arabism with the struggle against imperialism and other Arab leaders, specifically for Iraq (p. 232). Through symbolic exchanges over the "Voice of Arabs", Nasser helped the construction of the norms of Arabism, which prevents any alliance of the Arab states with the West and mobilized societies across the region against Iraq by presenting the Bagdad Pact as a symbol of Arab treachery and Western imperialism (Barnett, 1998, p. 42). As said before to frame an event means to shape how the event is understood (Barnett, 1998, p. 43). In this case, Nasser framed the Baghdad Pact by presenting it as a symbol of disunity with the following expressions:

> Egypt proposes to the Arab states a foreign policy based on developing Arab unity and independent stature and offers to put all its economic, military and moral resources at the disposal of Arab nationalism. Nuri al-Said, on the other hand, proposes a policy under which each Arab state would act alone and decide its own future, which would make it easy for the West to swallow them. (Quoted in Barnett, 1998, p. 114)

Thereby, Nasser presented Egypt as a symbol of Arab unity, independence and a relentless supporter of Arab nationalism who can dispose of all its faculties for the Arab cause. On the contrary, Nuri al-Said was portrayed as a symbol of disunity and weakness that can be swallowed by the West, the imperialists, as it had been before. Nasser built a correlation between the Pact the future of Arab nationalism and the security of the Arab states (Barnett, 1998, p. 112). The quotation from Hussein deserves to be given special attention in indicating

the power of the discourse and the symbolic politics "riots such as we had never seen before disrupted the whole country. I had no alternative but to call out the Legion [...] That was the end of Jordan and Baghdad Pact" (King Hussein of Jordan, 1962, p. 93).

During the discussions about the Pact, in April 1955 Nasser participated a conference with the most prominent world leaders of the time who endeavored a neutralist position in the bipolar world (Dawisha, 2003, p. 166), with the connections he had during the conference he signed arms deal with Czechoslovakia which according to Jordanian King Hussein "changed everything" (King Hussein of Jordan, 1962, p. 106). The Arms deal not only justified the Egyptian independence but also presented as a victory over imperialism and Israel (Dawisha, 2003, p. 169), as Stephens (1971) also states:

> Overnight Nasser's prestige and popularity soared among the Arab publics to a height no modern leader had reached before, after then Arab nationalism was symbolized with neutrality. He was admired for his boldness and his refusal to submit an arms control system imposed by the Western powers which seemed to leave the Arabs at the mercy of the Israeli army. (p. 161)

According to Dawisha (2003), at the Conference, Nasser was treated not only as the representative of Egypt, but he was also treated as the representive of the Arab world by the media and the other leaders (p. 166). There were huge riots within the Arab states as Hussein (1962) expressed "hundreds of thousands of Jordanians listening avidly the propaganda on Cairo Radio, saw in Nasser a sort of a mystical savior" (p. 88). Thus, the Arms Deal was not only seen as a symbol of Egyptian independence but also as an Arab victory over 'imperialism' and Israel, its 'illegitimate offspring' (Dawisha, 2003, 169). Thus, it can be said that the Arms Deal framed as a success that won against dependent Arab leaders, imperialism and Israel, that was used as an important tool in the construction of his pan-Arabic identity.

In March 1955 Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia formed a tripartite alliance, namely Arab Solidarity Pact, against the Baghdad Pact, whereas Jordan and Lebanon decided, although reluctantly, not to sign the Baghdad Pact despite signing was for their interests. Walt (1987) interprets it as forming an alliance against a common threat from Egyptian and Syrian perspectives and some bandwagoning from Saudi Arabia (p. 71). However, he cannot explain the situation from Jordan and Lebanon's viewpoints. As a matter of fact, many of the Syrian officials were hesitant about Syrian participation considering it neglected its economic, strategic and political interests, but Syria joined despite these concerns. Nasser successfully presented the pact as being against the Arab norms by manipulating the symbolic sanctions that caused the Arab leaders to cut their ties with the West and ally with Nasser, although it was against their interests to do so (Barnett, 1998, p. 119). His ability to organize an aggressive media campaign over the 'Voice of Arabs' or provoke a coup against the leaders who intended to sign the Pact convinced the leaders not to sign it which helped the solidification of Nasser's pan-Arabism despite the fact that it "constituted a permanent challenge to the very legitimacy of these existing states" (Podeh, 1994, p. 35). Therefore, it can be said that by framing the Baghdad Pact as a symbol of disunity and high treason to the Arab cause, "it alienated neutralist, nationalist and Pan-Arab opinion" (Batatu, 2004, p. 679), Nasser constructed an Arab norm in which any alliance with the West is prohibited by using symbolic sanctions which indicates the bindingness of the normative factors, and so, the explanatory power of constructivism.

Suez Crisis and War

One of the historic events that contributed to the ascent of pan-Arabist movement led by Nasser was the 1956 Suez Crisis which could be traced back to the Nasser's and his colleagues' efforts to build a dam in the Aswan region to increase the proportion of the cultivated land (Dawisha, 2003, p. 175). The dam has come to symbolize the dynamic, industrialized and self-sufficient Egypt (Dawisha, 2003, p. 178), but due to the high costs and

the need for a technical team and equipment, Egypt was not able to build it on its own. In 1955, the United States, the World Bank and Great Britain offered assistance to build the Dam under several conditions like World Bank's supervision over the Egyptian budget and a commitment by Egypt not to search for any aid from USSR (Stephens, 1971, p. 174-175). Nasser hesitated since supervision over the budget means foreign control over Egypt's finances as another extension of imperialism, which he also targeted with the following words: "[Y]ou may die of your fury, for you will not be able to dominate us or to control our existence, for we know our way - the road of honour, freedom and pride" (Stephens, 1971, p. 194). Another speech of Nasser deserves to be quoted at length:

> [T]he imperialists want us to be their dependents and when they issued an order to respond to it...We have a pride in Arabism and our land cannot be sold for money. They want us to give in to Israel on all points and forsake Palestine and our brothers in North Africa and to agree as the Security Council agreed, to the slaughter in Algeria. They want us to execute the policy dictated to us. Egypt has refused to do this and wants to have an independent personality. (Quoted in Stephens, 1971, p. 195).

By saying so, he presented the situation with its linkages to Arabism, independence, and so could have a leading role in the Arab politics, by constructing the Arab norms making connections with other Arab states like Algeria and Palestine. By proposing an image of Arabism that cannot be sold for money and that is independent, not submissive to the imperialists, and sensitive to the Arab cause, and the Palestinian cause, he constructed new norms that can constrain the behaviors of other Arab leaders.

With the effects of the Czechs Arms Deal, Britain and the U.S. assumed that Nasser was negotiating with the Communists, so they withdrew the offer (Stephens, 1971, p. 193-195). Without any financial help from the West, Nasser was decided to raise its own money to build the Aswan Dam, and Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company on 26 July 1956. He later made a statement about that decision about which he said:

> [T]he money had to be found; and the only means I had of increasing the national revenue by any marked degree, was by nationalizing the Suez Canal [Company]. I knew that I was taking a calculated risk... I believed that, in the time needed for him (Eden) to mobilize sufficient forces, it would be possible for us to reach a peaceful solution. (Quoted in Dawisha, 2003, p. 178)

It can be said that Nasser had miscalculated the risks since a tripartite attack by Israel, Britain and French started to defeat Egypt militarily and to topple Nasser, to do that Israel invaded Sinai; and Britain and France, using this as an excuse, called an ultimatum to both of the parties to withdraw their forces 100 miles from the sides of the Canal, but British and French also bombed Egyptian airfields (Dawisha, 2003, p. 179). Both US and USSR were against the attacks, and Eisenhower warned against the use of force, thus, with the lack of US support the troops were evacuated (Dawisha, 2003, p. 180). Egypt, who had been militarily defeated, had a great political victory.

It can be said that the whole attack began to stop Nasser-led Arabism but what happened at the end was the opposite, it is the transformation of the "Arab world into a sea, a jungle of slogans and blood... Nasser fanned it with exhortations against reactionaries and the enemies of the people who wished to impede his march" (Vatikiotis, 1961, p. 133). According to Vatikiotis (1961), the war led him to transform Egypt from the least Arab state to the leader of the revolutionary pan-Arabic movement that aims for Arab unity (p. 234). In the introduction of Nasser's book (1959), *The Philosophy of the Revolution* John Badeau argued that "With the Suez Canal Crisis, Nasser suddenly filled the Middle Eastern horizon, becoming a regional hero. To restless and frustrated Arab nationalists, he indeed seemed a second Saladin, turning the table on Western imperialism" (p. 14). In the speech Nasser made after the evacuation, he used various symbols to interrelate independence, Egyptian power and independence, as he said;

> This is the most memorable moment of a lifetime... We have dreamed of this moment which had been denied to our fathers, grandfathers and our brothers who have fought for years to achieve this moment and to see the Egyptian flag alone in our skies. Citizens, we pray God no other flag will ever fly on our land. (Quoted in Stephens, 1971, p. 184)

From these words, it can be inferred that Nasser framed the event within the historical narrative of the colonial past, and he proposed it in such a way that a dream, the complete independence, came true thanks to him. When Nasser decided to nationalize the Canal even his Arab rivals had to pretend as if they were contended, appraised the boldness of the move, and congratulated Nasser (Satloff, 1994, p. 151). He proposed the nationalization not only a proof of Egyptian independence but also as a symbol of Arab independence, and by doing so he got rid of all prolongations of imperialism and restored the Arab pride. It is obvious that the nationalization was related with Egyptian state politics and had nothing to do with the other Arabs, but it is framed as if it had been an Arab success over the Western 'other'. Nasser stated on the day of nationalization "we shall all defend our freedom and Arabism, and work until the Arab nation extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab Gulf" (Quoted in Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 234). As can be seen, Nasser's nationalism had been amalgamated into the broader Arab nationalism that would have been led the "Arab revolution", a movement aimed to convert all Arab states into modernized, independent states later into a unified 'Arab Nation'. (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 234) According to Barnett (1998), "those who live by the symbol and the speech are expected to deliver with action and material commitments" (p. 45), Nasser with the nationalization of the Canal, along with the Czech arms deal, and Baghdad Pact, proved his commitment to the Arab cause by framing the events within historical narratives, constructing the Arab norms by using symbols and applying symbolic sanctions, and also proved himself as the hero of the pan-Arabism by creating and shaping its identity against the others 'imperialists' and uncommitted Arab leaders. As Barnett (1998) argues that "Nasser's power came not from the barrel of a gun, but from his symbolic capital and his ability to frame the Suez War as part of a history of imperialism that had dismembered the Arab nation and continued to keep it powerless" (p. 128). According to Wendt (1999), role-identities are the meanings which actors ascribe to themselves when seeing themselves from the perspective of the others (p. 335), thus, the role-identity Nasser attributed to himself was the leader of the revolutionary Arab nationalist movement, a pan-Arab hero.

The elections in 1956 in Jordan can be an illustration of Nasser's strong position as a pan-Arab hero, he can be said to have the power to affect all of the political processes even within the Arab states. In the Jordanian elections when a Muslim candidate was asked if he had been supported by Nasser or the other Muslims, and he replied that he did not know, later, a Christian communist had been elected who was supported by Nasser (Dawisha, 2003, p. 184). This position of Nasser was developed with the construction of his and his states' identity that necessitated a rewriting of history. According to Karlsson, the use of history serves for different needs and interests in a particular period and society which could be instrumentalized for political motivations. As he put "interpretations of the past and expectations for the future, was introduced in order to express an understanding that human beings and various identity groups orient themselves in life and society by making use of history" (Karlsson: 1999:5). As it has been argued before, during the 1952 Revolution the primary emphasis was on Egypt not that on Arab nationalism, nevertheless, during the construction of pan-Arabic identity, it had been tried to be indicated that even the coup's first and foremost concern had been related with that of pan-Arabism, as Anwar al-Sadat remarks in 1957 in an article published in *Al-Ahram*,

> There was nothing behind our coup other than Arab nationalism . . . which awakened a new historical development… We must nurture this link between the people of the Arab nation . . . for when the revolution occurred in Egypt, it rendered the Arab nation one nation, sharing one history and claiming one destiny. (Quoted in Vatikiotis, 1961, p. 108)

With the rewriting of history by the political elite at that time, and symbolic interactions, entrapments along with the framing of the events in historical narratives as well as Nasser's effective political rhetoric Nasser and Egypt can be said to have been constructed as the leaders of the Arab nationalism.

The United Arab Republic (UAR)

At the highest point of the unity talks, Syrian Baathists came to Nasser with a proposal of unity in January 1958 for various reasons such as preventing the communists and the political turmoil in their country, increasing their legitimacy, and achieving their ideological and political goals (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 15). It can be said that being a pragmatist, Nasser was not so enthusiastic about the unification due to his unwillingness to be involved in complicated Syrian politics; nevertheless, despite his hesitations, the United Arab Republic had been constituted on 1 February 1958 with the fusion of Egypt and Syria (Sela, 1997, p.189). Although the unification was presented as a natural process towards the whole Arab unity, its establishment underwent different developments. Syria and Egypt were forced to unify since they were bound by their unification rhetoric, as Afif Al-Bizri, Syria's chief of staff also argued;

> No one wanted unity. Even Abd al-Nasser didn't want it... So, I waited for the appropriate moment and said: now we will offer unity to Abd al-Nasser. Since they're all saying unity, unity, unity. Nobody would dare to say no, we don't want it. The masses would rise against them. I mean we followed the masses. (Quoted in Mufti, 1996, p. 91)

Most of the Egyptian officers were also skeptical about the merger as they thought it would be detrimental to Egypt's economic and political interests. However, Nasser was bound by the rhetorical entrapment, and had to accept the offer due to the concerns about the image management. Nasser's concerns about the unification can be inferred from this statement of him;

> Bitar (The Ba'athist leader of Syria and Foreign Minister) told me when a person prepares to dive into a swimming pool, he has initial fear of the water, but this fear disappears once he has jumped into the water. So, I told him, what scares me is that I may be jumping into an empty pool. (Quoted in Dawisha, 2003, p. 198)

It can be said that rationalist argumentations fail to explain this situation since they cannot explain a situation in that actors behave against their absolute interests. Nasser can be said as to be bound by his own rhetoric, he, as a pan-Arab hero, a fond of unification and the Arab cause, could not decline the unification offer. He would have no longer been an Arab hero, if he had been to refuse the offer according to his strategic and economic interests, if his identity is assumed to be as the basis of his interests, it would become clear to understand his acceptance of the merger, as Wendt (1992) argues that "actors do not have a portfolio of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead, they define their interests in the process of defining situations" (p. 398). Thus, he had to accept the offer for his own ideational interests. According to Barnett (1998), "for both of the Syrians and the Egyptians, the road to unity was paved by symbolic interactions, attempts at impression management, and then symbolic entrapment" (p. 131). Thus, it can be said that although unification was against both of their strategic interests for both parties, they had to merge due to the normative factors over them, and symbolic exchanges, they had to unify due to their symbolic standing and so for the regime survival as it can also be inferred from Bizri's statements.

Once the UAR was established, it had been welcomed by the masses, the problems and hesitations were not projected onto the masses, and the unification was presented as a natural outcome of the process (Jankowski, 2002, p. 158). Under the leadership of Nasser, the Arab nationalist movement transformed itself from a call for neutrality and anti-colonialism to a call for unification. Moreover, Nasser encouraged other Arab leaders to join the unification thereby challenging Iraq and Jordan to come after Egypt and Syria demonstrating both the masses and

UAR wanted it (Barnett, 1998, p. 131). As a response to these, and with the increasing public pressure and symbolic challenges, Iraq and Jordan established their own unification alternative - the Arab Federation in February 1958 (Maddy-Weitzman, 1990, p. 65-75). Despite the first welcome to the Federation by Nasser, he began rhetorical aggressiveness towards it underlining Iraq's involvement in the Baghdad Pact, he attacked the Federation by proposing it as another tool of the West (Barnett, 1998, p. 132). Slogans and chants were all against Nuri al-Said calling him as a 'traitor', "traitor, O' Nuri al-Said, our people are made of steel" (Dawisha, 2003, p. 202). Although this slogan was not called by Nasser, it can be said that in the construction of Nasser's and Egypt's identity on Arab nationalist grounds, Nuri al-Said can be thought of as the 'other', who is an Arab having relations with and even allied with the West in betrayal of the Arab cause that Nasser would never do. Nasser's rhetoric and call for unification captivated all the Arab people, there was civil unrest in most of the states, especially Jordan and Lebanon. At the end in July 1958, there was a coup in Iraq by General Abd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel Abd al-Salaam Aref, the royal family and Nuri al-Said were killed, due to many reasons but most importantly the Baghdad Pact and the isolation of Iraq from the Arab politics (Batatu, 2004, p. 801-804). And, that was the pinnacle of the Nasser-led Arab nationalism.

Iraq right after the revolution seemed to have close relations with Nasser, Colonel Aref, a Ba'athist, even talked about their intent to join the UAR, nevertheless, he was defeated by Qasim who along with the Shiite and Kurdish minorities was reluctant about unification challenging Nasser (Batatu, 2004, p. 815-820; Mufti, 1996, p. 113-116). According to Khalidi (1991), the problem between Egypt and Iraq was emanating again from their different understandings of nationalism (p. 111-113), which in turn transformed into a rivalry between Nasser and Qasim, both of whom were revolutionaries.

The Beginnings of the Descent of Pan-Arabism

In September 1961, Syria declared its separation from the UAR due its discomfort with Nasser's strong intermeddling into Syrian economic and political life (Kerr, 1970; Rabinovich, 1972; Mufti, 1996, p. 132-139). However, it can be said that the main reasons for disunity lies back in the pre-unification concerns as Seale (1986) puts it "a long misunderstanding between them on what was meant by unity—a dialogue at cross-purposes which only the painful union experiment brought into the open" (p. 224-225). Perplexed by the secession, Nasser moved to the defensive side for the first time in his history, moving in two new directions, revisionism and a tendency toward "a more centrist version of Arab nationalism" (Barnett, 1998, p. 138). The importance of symbolic politics can also be inferred from the description of secession by Nasser as being more destructive to Arab nationalism than the tripartite attack on Egypt during the Suez Crisis (Nutting, 1972, p. 267). Constructivism offers that actors construct and reconstruct their identity continuously during the process in relation to interaction and events (Barnett, 1993, p. 275). With the demise of UAR, Nasser needed to revise his Arab nationalism by changing his rhetoric and symbols, and so to reconstruct his identity since Arab nationalism was became a significant part of his identity. As Barnett (1998) ideally proved, a month before the secession Nasser indicated a new type of flexibility about Arab unity based on progressive development "from solidarity, to alliance, to total constitutional unity" (p. 138). And, right after the secession, "Nasser purified Egypt's Arab message" (Barnett, 1998, p. 138), by distinguishing two versions of Egypt, one Egypt as a state, the other Egypt as a revolution in which it can carry its message to the masses and instigate radical change (Kerr, 1970, p. 2). He revised his Arab nationalism in such a way that although he was still talking about the unity, he changed the meaning of unity; before the secession he was speaking of "unity of ranks" in which different types of regimes could cooperate against external threats, namely, the West and Israel; whereas after the secession, he began speaking of "unity of purpose" that implies the objective for true unity and revolution (Sela, 2004, p. 188), so the emphasis was moved from

'Arab unity' to 'Arab solidarity'. According to Sela (1988), it was for Nasser to recover his prestige and to increase his power in Egypt and the Arab world by developing more radical reforms and rhetoric to interfere in the domestic affairs of other states by being a revolutionary against reactionaries (p. 48). Wendt (1999) argues that "daily life of international politics is an on-going process of states taking identities in relation to 'others', casting them into corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result" (p. 21). Thus, it can be said that the change in Nasser's rhetoric arises from the change in circumstances depending on the developments during the process, however, this change can also be said to trigger a revision in his identity since identities are relational. After the secession he had no longer supported a unity in its actual meaning, and he gave a primacy to the revolutionary character of its regime rather than a tendency for unification. With this motive, he was involved in the revolution in Yemen as his identity required him to behave so.

In 1952 of September, with the death of the absolute ruler Imam Ahmed, Mohammed al-Bader, son of Imam Ahmed, tried to succeed the throne, a group of army officers under the leadership of Abdallah al-Sallal seized the power, and established the Yemen Arab Republic (Barnett, 1998, p. 234). In response, Bader made a counterrevolution with the support of the local loyal tribes, the result was a civil war between the Royalists headed by Sallal with the support of Saudi Arabia on the one hand, and the Republicans headed by Bader with the support of Nasser on the other (Barnett, 1998, p. 139). The Yemen venture turned out very costly for Nasser, the Egyptian active involvement in the civil war was lasted for 5 years far more than expected by Nasser and the number of Egyptian army troops in Yemen reached seventy thousand. As a result, Egypt experienced a great deal of military and economic loss (Dawisha, 2003, p. 236-237). Nasser later admitted that the Yemen venture was "a miscalculation; we never thought that it would lead to what it did" (Quoted in Dawisha, 2003, p. 235). It can be rightfully said that the Yemeni venture was totally against the material and absolute interests of Nasser, but due to the entrapments by his own rhetoric, and for ideational interests of him as image saving, Nasser had to be involved in the civil war. His construction as an Arab hero constrained his behaviors in such a way that in order to meet expectations although it was against Nasser's pure material interests to get involved in Yemen, he supported the Yemeni revolution due to the fact that if not his leadership of the Arab nation would be undermined (Vatikiotis, 1978, p. 238), as an Egyptian official also stated that "Nasser intervened in Yemen to recover his prestige. It is natural for a leader to try and restore himself after the failure of the UAR" (Barnett, 1998, p. 139). From this statement, it can be inferred that after the Syrian secession, to recover his prestige, entrapped by his own rhetoric and since his identity required to do so despite that was against his pure material interests.

Tripartite Talks

While the military intervention in Yemen was continuing, there were two coups in 1963 February and March, respectively in Iraq and Syria, both of the coups were by Ba'athists who supported unification, so the unification talks began again. It can be said that both of the states were inclined to unify with Nasser to improve their legitimacy which could be an indication of his continuing prestige. However, according to Kerr (1970), the tripartite talks failed at the end due to mutual distrust, antagonism and suspicion (p. 49-95).

The Summitry System

From the establishment of the UAR to the failure of the tripartite talks, Arab nationalism's main emphasis was on unification. Its initial identification with anti-Westernism, anti-colonialism was just used to present the rival Arab states as traitors and others, the others were obviously West and Israel, but they were also the rival Arab states as a tool of the Western powers. Within that period, unification was the main the theme that changed with the Syria's

attempts to reclaim its prestige by blaming Nasser for being weak on Israel which was carrying out its irrigation plan from the Jordan river (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 95-96). As a response to Syria, Nasser made a diplomatic move by inviting all Arab leaders to Cairo to discuss the Arab-Israeli conflict which enabled him to quiet Syrians and claim his leadership (Kerr, 1970, p. 98). It can be said that to present Israel as the 'other' again, as a common threat, Nasser distracted attention from his regional failures, namely the dissolution of UAR, failure of tripartite talks and losses in Yemen. Moreover, he was able to present his dedication to the Arab cause by inviting rival Arab states with opposing ideologies and positions. According to Barnett, the summitry system drew attention to an important change in Arab politics due to the growing particularism emanating from the failed integration attempts, and focusing on Israel helped the Arab leaders to overlook their differences (Barnett, 1998, p. 147). It can be argued that at the beginning Nasser, as a strong pan-Arab leader, was rejecting the artificial boundaries of Arab states and was calling for unification, and he also often called the masses in the other Arab states to react their leaders who behave against Nasser's version of Arab nationalism. His Arabism created new mechanisms for collective Arab effort against the common 'other', Israel at first. Nevertheless, in time as can be seen Nasser's Arab nationalism was also re-constructed itself as a nationalism respectful to sovereignty, thus the norms of pan-Arabism can be said as deconstructed.

During the summits, the liberation of the Palestine, another forgotten issue, came to the front with the decline of the unification talks, as Nasser said "three years ago...there was not even talk about Palestine", and he called the liberation of Palestine as the "ultimate Arab objective" (Barnett, 1998, p. 148). As such it could be argued that Nasser redefined the objectives of pan-Arabism, thus, redefined pan-Arabism itself which is in peace with the existing territorial boundaries.

An important outcome of the Summitry meetings could be the establishment of two new institutions, the Unified Arab Command (UAC) which remained only on paper, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) which was unexpectedly gained greater autonomy and transformed the Arab-Israeli conflict and inter-Arab politics that was sponsored by Nasser (Barnett, 1998, p. 149).

The Six-Day War of 1967

The summit system was ended after two years due to the symbolic conflicts between Nasser and Syria, among which could be the former's aims to control the Syria's foreign policy against Israel through these meetings and the latter's use of the Israeli issue to attack the former (Seale, 1986, p. 100). The breaking point of the tension was the May 1965 Israeli attack on one of the Syrian diverting stations on the Jordan river, by which Syria attacked Nasser on the grounds that Syria was ready to attack Israel but Nasser was hiding behind the summit resolutions to avoid a war (Rabinovich, 1972, p. 167-168). Nasser propounded as follows:

> We must first of all have a plan. If, for example, an aggression is committed against Syria, do I attack Israel? If the case is so, then Israel can set for me the time at which to attack. Why? Just because it commits an aggression and hits one or two tractors, I am to attack Israel the second day. Is this logical and sound talk? It is we who will choose the time of the battle. It is we who will assess our position. It is we who will fight our battle. (Quoted in Barnett, 1998, p. 155)

Nasser was aware of the power of the symbolic sanctions, since he was the main manipulator of them in attacking the rival Arab states, that's why he feared these sanctions would necessitate him to go to war with Israel and that is what was happened. He was a pragmatist in that sense and did not want to go to war with Israel. He asked "is it conceivable that I should attack Israel while there are 50.000 Egyptian troops in Yemen?" (Stephens, 1971, p. 454). In 1965, another coup had taken place bringing to power the most radical regime in

Syrian history (Seale, 1986, 104), and the new regime framed the summit system as betraying the Arab cause (Gerges, 1994, p. 196). With a series of incidents between Israel and Syria, and with the public pressure on him, Nasser allied with Syria against Israel, he argued;

> we have gained the rights which were ours in 1956... We have left the next move to Israel. Whether it wants to reply to our exercising our rights with violence or non-violence we are prepared... If Israel chooses war, then it is welcome to it. (Quoted in Stephens, 1971, p. 479)

Later he said "we realized that the possibility of an armed attack existed, and we accepted the risk" (Quoted in Stephens, 1971, p. 482). According to Barnett (1998) "Nasser was caught between the symbolic and the strategic, and he sacrificed the other" (p. 157). Symbolic competition made Nasser to have this decision, just like King Hussein who also allied with Syria and Egypt against Israel. Although Nasser was devastated economically and militarily after the involvement in the revolution in Yemen, he knew that it was against his material and strategic interests, and he did not want to do so but he had to since he was symbolically cornered by Syria and his Arab nationalist identity required him to do so. As once an identity is created it is not easily transformed into another one (Wendt, 1992, p. 411), and as Nasser's pan-Arabic identity was constructed against Israel, and he was entrapped by symbolic exchanges, he did what his identity imposed upon him.

Israel won the war within six days and captured Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria (Gershoni and Jankowski, 1995, p. 154). The effects of war on Egypt had been devastative, it lost 10.000 soldiers and 1.500 officers along with huge economic and financial loses (Dawisha, 2003, p. 254). On the same day as the declaration of defeat Nasser announced his resignation, but with the masses protesting the decision by adopting the slogan "We are your soldiers, Gamal!", he withdrew the decision the day after (Aburish, 2004, p. 268-269). After the war, there were several important events like the Khartoum summit in 1967 in which the three no's policy had been adopted by the Arab leaders, no peace, no negotiation, no recognition of Israel that Nasser gave lip service. Nevertheless, till his death in 1970, Nasser accepted the UN Resolution 242 in November 1967 that was adopted to reach a final solution between the Arabs and Israel, Israel was expected to withdraw from the territories it acquired by force, but the Israelis did not give any attention to the Resolution (Aburish, 2004, p. 278). To get the acquired lands back, Nasser waged the War of Attrition against Israel in 1968 that continued till 1970 which resulted with a cease fire while leaving the frontiers as the same right after that Nasser passed away thus left the conflict with Israel unsettled (Aburish, 2004, p. 270-280; Stephens, 1971, p. 560).

Dawisha (2003) made a sound assessment of the post-1967 situation in Arab politics, for him "it was Arab statism not Arab nationalism that defined the post-1967 era, wataniya not qawmiya that determined political relations among the Arab states, and the change began with Nasser himself" (p. 254). After the war Egypt's main goal became "the eradication of the consequences of the defeat", and the foreign policy options were determined by the attitudes of states during the war as Nasser argued "[O]ur attitude toward any Arab state depends on that state's attitude toward the battle" (Dawisha, 2003, p. 255). It can be said that the charisma of Nasser, whom most of the Arab people had believed as the only leader capable of uniting all Arabs, faded away with the defeat, as Ajami (1981) puts "the charismatic relationship between Nasser and the masses formed during the bright youthful days of Bandung and Suez was shattered with the defeat; another variant born out of despair and a sense of loss, sustained him until his death" (p. 85). According to Dawisha (2003), one of the reasons for the decrease in Nasser's charisma and the influence of Arab nationalism after the war was not the defeat but that was because, imperialism, one of the most important 'other's in constructing the Arab national identity, lost its influence and became less relevant due to many instances in the region

such as the dismissal of Sir John Glubb in Jordan, in Lebanon the replacement of Camille Chamoun with Fuad Shihab, Algerian triumph over French colonial power (p. 285).

It can be said that after the 1967 defeat, Nasser became less charismatic and more Egypto-centric than before since his country Egypt suffered great a economic, financial and military loss due to the war. Nasser was concentrated on the recovery aftermath, on the other hand, the masses still wanted him as can be seen in the reactions after his resignation. As identities are relatively stable and once he constructed an identity based on the leadership in the Arab world, so he was still engaged in the Arab affairs despite the decrease in his influence as can be seen in his involvement in the Khartoum summit deciding to establish a ceasefire in Yemen with King Faisal, and the War of Attrition. Nevertheless, it could have still been said that a change took place in the Nasserite nationalist identity in such a way that it became smoother with his acceptance of UN Resolution 242 and his support to King Hussein in accepting the Rogers plan. Despite the fact that identities are relatively stable since they are accomplished by ongoing establishment of practice, Wendt (1999) argues that "daily life of international politics is an on-going process of states taking identities in relation to 'others', casting them into corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result" (p. 21). So, identities are in an indefinite process of construction, and as moving from the Dawisha's (2003) argumentation since the 'other', imperialism, had changed thus the Nasserite identity change can be explained by constructivism. Moreover, Wendt (1992) continues that for change to occur there should be "the presence of new social situations that cannot be managed in terms of pre-existing self-conceptions" (p. 398). This is also valid for Nasser, since after the 1967 War, it was obvious that Arabs could not defeat Israelis and their foremost desire to remove them from the Arab soil had come to an end and also the imperialist West's relevance, the other most imminent 'other', have also decreased. Thus, it can be rightfully argued that he was the most influential leader in the Arab world of his time, and despite the decrease in his influence and popularity, he was seen as the Arab hero by the masses as it could be inferred from his funeral in which "men, women and children wept and wailed in the streets" following the notice of his death (Nutting, 1972, p. 476). As a Beirut newspaper had written "one hundred million human beings are orphans" with his death (Aburish, 2004, p. 315-316).

Conclusion

This paper tried to shed the light on the construction of Nasser's and Egypt's identity under his rule with the help of a social constructivist theoretical approach. It tries to explain how Nasser constructed himself as a pan-Arab hero by cleverly manipulating the symbolic politics and establishing the Arab norms and at the same time being constrained by them. His power came not from economic or military capabilities, as rationalism fails to explain, but rather from his ability to frame the events within a historical narrative in a rhetorical way and to establish the pan-Arab norms and to stay committed to those norms, as one can see in his involvement in the establishment of the UAR, North Yemen Civil War in 1962 and the Six-Day War of 1967 despite all were against his absolute material interests. The construction and reconstruction of the Arab norms by Nasser before and after the UAR, which were, respectively, against and for sovereignty, are interesting issues that constructivism has a great deal of explanatory power. Moreover, after the defeat of the Six-Day War, how the Egyptian identity was reconstructed with the change of the perceptions of 'others' can be meaningfully explained by constructivism. In sum, it can be argued that although Egypt's primacy was at the forefront for Nasser at the beginning of his rule, and his involvement in pan-Arabic discourse was mainly motivated by pragmatic reasons, with the interactions and influences during the processes and events, he was constructed as a pan-Arab hero who could designate the norms of pan-Arabism, and he was also constrained by these norms since his interests were emanating from his identity and his identity became pan-Arabic in relation to the 'others', namely the imperialist West, the

extension of imperialism Israel, and the rival Arab leaders. Constrained by his own construction of norms, his identity and interests forced him to behave in certain ways that were against his material interests. Nevertheless, his and the Egyptian identity had changed over time, especially after the Six-Day War, with a change in situations and with the change in the perception of 'others'.

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