A Comparative Analysis on Arab and European Identity Structures: Portraying Distinctive Transnational Identity Patterns

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We know what we are, but know not what we may be... (William Shakespeare – Hamlet, Act 4, Scene 5)

ABSTRACT

Eighteen Arab countries speaking the same language (Arabic) and sharing the same cultural background, yet so far, a superficial coordination exists among them. Whereas, comparatively, European community members, who have less in common (in terms of multilingual and multicultural societies), have succeeded in forming a certain unified transnational identity structure. In order to understand this perplexity which indicates an apparent incoherence vis-à-vis both identity formations – in terms of unification models – this article proposes to dig deeply within the transnational European identity formation so as to disclose the mechanisms of its unifying functions by excavating tangibly rationalized theoretical analyses and apply them on Arab identity formations. Accordingly, a comparison is performed based on a set of theoretical analysis, where Arab and European identity formations are comparatively examined for cause of identifying plausible unifying patterns that may be adhered within the construct of a common Arab identity structure. Our original analysis framework is based on several theoretical approaches leading to the identification of identity-significant independent variables that will enable us to measure the similarities and the differences between the two above mentioned identity models.

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1.0   Introduction

The act of deconstructing and analyzing the concepts that embody the functions of identity formations, in the aim of apprehending their hidden perplexities, has proven to be a major challenge in the fields of political sciences and social psychology. From this point and through our aspiration in comprehending the roles executed by the European and Arab identity formations, in terms of transnationalism, a macro view in interpreting the performance of these identity structures is elucidated. Nonetheless, our major reasoning falls under concrete theories already applied to the validation of the transnational European concept. In comparison to the Arab identity, where a common structure identifying a similar background takes precedence in terms of culture and language - where the Arabic language is a pride to all Arabs as Hitti (1963) says - the European identity is characterized by multiculturalism where "…different European nations…speak 67 languages (not counting the dialects) (Borman and Fowler, 1997: 487)." Consequently, in this article, we will try to evaluate the basis of such noticeably contrasting measures – that indicate incoherence in terms of unifying models – amongst both identities (the Arab and European) by performing a multi-disciplinary comparison between their formation through a comprehensive literature review on the subject. Our methodological approach is based, as a first step, in defining the main components of the European and Arab transnational identity structures. Then, as a second step, we will perform a comparison amongst these transnational identity structures by using an analysis framework composed of the following variables:

 (a) As History has always played an important role in initiating identity formation through the transmittance of historical foundations, which still maintain a leading role in forming clearer conceptions and better understandings of present European and Arab societies, the first variable of our framework is the Ethno-Cultural Heritage rationalized through the theoretical configuration of the Essentialist approach (Fan, 2008: 414). (b) The second variable of our framework is based on the Rational Choice theoretical approach through the measurement of the notion of Benefit defined as a utilitarian concept that represents the aims and goals of individuals and societies who intend to maximize their levels of utility in anticipation of accomplishing (most plausibly) economic benefits (Jørgensen et al., 2006: 32-33; Fan, 2008: 414). (c) The Functionalist approach serves as the theoretical background for our third variable in terms of shifting "…individual attachment away from nation-state to supranational entit[ies]… (Fan, 2008: 414)" by providing" Function and "… satisfying individual and social needs… (Fan, 2008:414)." (d) The Social-Psychological approach, our fourth variable, is defined on the basis of the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Hogg, 2006: 111) and the Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (De Cremer, 2004: 318) enabling us to measure both the motivational and cognitive factors leading to the merging of identity of the self within a group identity mold (Fan, 2008: 414-415; De Cremer, 2004: 316-325)." (e) Based on the fact that the effect of media on societies is significant, our fifth variable is Communication, rationalized through the Social-Constructivism approach where communication and social learning are the foundation (Fan, 2008: 415). (f) Recognizing the importance of "…the relations between citizens and various levels of political entities… (Fan, 2008: 415)" in the identity formation process, our sixth and final variable measures the impact of Institutions on the basis of the Neo-Institutionalism approach that is based on the effects of institutions in rendering identities apt for social/political change (Fan, 2008: 415).

The results obtained will show contrasting designs within the perspective of unification where the most eligible variables for European identity are Institution and Benefit, whereas, for the Arab identity, the most effective variables are Communication and Ethno-Cultural Heritage.

Finally, our original multi-dimensional analysis framework that is based on several theoretical approaches leading to the identification of identity-significant independent variables provides the basis of a solid methodological approach for an identity formation analysis.

2.0   Main components of Arab identity

The foundation of "Arabness"(Abdel Rahim, 2005: 29) transcends from a vast ancestry of previous generations as "It has existed for as long as the Arabs have walked the stage of history, and it has been subject to negotiation by every generation for nearly a millennium and a half (Kramer, 1993: 172)." Arabs, therefore, form a distinctive identity that requires definition in the sense of form and structure. Their culture is based on many secular components upon which they identify themselves and their origins: genealogy and kinship (the importance of the tribe); honor and courage; paternalism and superior authority; eloquence (the value of oral expression in prose and poetry) (Ayish, 1998: 36).

Within the Arab society, it is the use of the Arabic language that initiates the overall liaison of a constructive structure that accumulates the formation of Arab identity (Abdel Rahim, 2005: 43-44). Through their history, Arabs have relied on their language as a central core for a collective and unified identity (Ayish, 1998: 37). Furthermore, Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an, the Word of Allah as revealed to Prophet Mohammed through Archangel Gabriel (Jibril). Arabs take pride in the use of their language (Kramer, 1993: 74) considering it their abode to a direct link with Allah. An important saying was quoted by Prophet Mohammed: "I love the Arabs for three things…I am an Arab, the Qur'an is in Arabic and the language of those in Paradise is in Arabic (Jameelah, 1989: 7)." Due to the sacredness of their language, Arab Muslims "…debate matters of pronunciation in the effort to reproduce the sound of revelation (Kean 1997: 55)."

After the death of Prophet Mohammed in 632 A.D., all the revelations that he received "…were collected into the Koran as we now know it, and gradually brought the inhabitants of virtually the whole of the Arabian peninsula to embrace Islam and acknowledge the political supremacy of his *umma* (Berkey, 2003: 61)." The importance of the Qur'an is also related to its teachings of the Islamic values that include unity (tawhid), the unity of God, man and the universe, in addition to belief (iman), worship (ibadah), knowledge (ilm) and community (umma) (Ayish, 1998: 37).

Arab identity is, therefore, structured upon two major components that function in completion with one another, the Arabic language and Islam. Islam that includes 90% of the Arab population (Abdel Rahim, 2005: 41) - while the remaining 10% are but a minority (Christians, Armenians, Druze, Hebrews…) (Farah, 1963: 148-152) – and the Arabic language that holds the pride of the Arab people as Phillip Hitti writes, "no people in the world has such enthusiastic admiration for literary expression and is so moved by the word, spoken or written, as the Arabs (Hitti, 1963: 21)."

3.0   The European identity: A foundation for unification

The European Union is a unified entity of twenty-seven nation states constructed upon a fusion of various national identities each relying on its basic model of existence. Although unified, every European nation state still maintains its own fundamental distinctiveness that has long been created. To be able to understand this form of structure named Europeanization or European Unification it is essential to know, at first, that "…humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government (Calhoun, 1993: 213)." Thus, for nations to be able to evolve and expand they must, at first, reinforce their inner scope of self-government since, "Politically and institutionally, the state remains the final term of reference (Pagden, 2002: 2)." Consequently, European nation states remain, somehow, independent in terms of their fundamental and basic identity structures whilst forming a certain commonness in terms of extended identity formations which will be elaborated more specifically in this study.

At a basic level, European unification is considered as the outcome of the proliferation of extended cultural identities (from agrarian societies where age, gender, tribes… formulated the essence of identity to regions, cities, communities, religion… which now characterize the basis of identity) that are

continuously increasing in this modern era where industrial capitalism plays an essential role. Needless to say, also, that an increase in the world population is defining new generations with new identities encompassing education, professionalism, ethnic and civic belongingness (Smith, 1992: 58).

In trying to comprehend the construction of European identity it is important to base the European Union structure on two distinct identities, the national and transnational, in terms of belongingness and desired citizenship. This comparative rationale will be based on theoretical approaches that are social, psychological and political which stipulate descriptive elements where corresponding variables, that affect the European identity, are abstracted (Fan, 2008: 414-416). Hence, the theoretical approaches that will be analyzed are the following: the essentialist approach, the rational choice approach, the functionalist approach, the social-psychological approach, the social-constructivism approach and the neo-institutionalism approach from which the following corresponding independent variables are extracted respectively: ethno-cultural heritage, benefit, function, psychology, communication and institution.

The first variable that will be examined in the process of analyzing the structure of the European identity and its influence on European citizens is the historical context labeled as Ethno-Cultural Heritage and rationalized through the theoretical configuration of the Essentialist approach that is a "primordialist approach (Fan, 2008: 414)." History has played an important role in the formation of Europeanization that has been conceived through the transmittance of historical foundations which still maintain a leading role in forming clearer conceptions and better understandings of present European societies. Consequently, these European societies, as all other societies, are structured upon their own Ethno-Cultural Heritage, (Smith, 1992: 58; Fincher, 1998: 728; Bar-Tal, 1997: 500; Fan, 2008: 414) which is considered as a "… basic structure of substance which transcends historical variations and change" (Kostakopoulou, 2001: 23).

Although change is inevitable in any form of society, it cannot be projected solely on historical evolution. Fan (2008) considers that the Essentialist Approach cannot be scientifically reasoned as he names it imaginary, legendary and mythical (Fan, 2008: 416-418). Even though Europe is known to be based on Christian culture, Christianity does not serve as a foundation to European history and identity. This is verified through, "Statistical analysis based on Eurobarometer (EB) (Fan, 2008: 418) data [which] shows that there is no clear correlation between citizens' religion and their degree of European identity (Fan, 2008: 418)."

History, however, cannot be erased from the existence of humanity as it is considered as one of the basic causal functions for progress and change. It serves as an essence for continuity, as Fincher (1998) says, "…more of us should "learn to think historically" and to keep in mind that history is not only about the past but about change and continuity. Most of all…it is about the long run (Fincher, 1998: 728)." Ultimately, to achieve a well-based European structure, its formation must encompass a diversification of social and cultural domains that are maneuvered through the historical essences of language, past and education – of every European country (De Beus, 2001: 289).

The second variable to be examined in affecting the European Unity project is Benefit, which is rationalized through the Rational Choice approach that is related to "…utilitarian factors…[where] those who benefit (or are likely to benefit) economically from European integration should be more supportive of the process (Fan, 2008: 414)." Benefit, therefore, is considered as a utilitarian concept that represents the aims and goals of individuals and societies who intend to maximize their levels of utility in anticipation of accomplishing (most plausibly) economical benefits (Jørgensen et al., 2006: 32-33, Fan, 2008: 414). An example that indicates the aspirations of acquiring additional economical benefits in joining the European Union is demonstrated through a scientific survey that has been conducted in Poland by CBOS (Colombus, 2002: 165) in 2001 – prior to the country's accession to the European Union on May 2004. According to the survey results, "… 49% of Poles believed that the Polish economy would benefit from EU membership and only 33% felt that it would not (18% did not know). Forty five percent felt that it would improve the competiveness of Polish firms compared with 26% who felt that it would

not (14% did not know) (Colombus, 2002: 165)." "Individuals [, therefore,] adopt identities in response to economic incentives such as access to patronage in the form of jobs markets and lands (Rousseau and van der Veen, 2005: 689)." This signifies that economical benefits are end products for the utilitarian factors that aim for European Unification.

The third variable, Function, is rationalized through the Functionalist approach, which maintains that "The shift of individual attachment away from nation-state to supranational entity is the result of institutions satisfying individual and social needs – the supranational entity meets better than nation-state (Fan, 2008: 414)." The significance of Function in the European Unity project has been achieved through the consent of European citizens who found the EU model more efficient than their nation-state model, as it has caused more satisfaction to their needs (Colombus, 2002: 414). These needs, that appear to have widened the scope for a better EU integration model, are tested upon citizen's preferences at a policy making level. "Statistics show that in the policy areas of education, currency, environment, and welfare, the proportion of "positive attitude" is larger in the group that prefer(s) the policy to be made on EU level (Fan, 2008: 418)," rather than the group that prefers it to be made on a national level. This signifies to greater efficiency of the EU as it corresponds to better economy and welfare, whilst pushing forward the European identity ahead of the nation state identity.

Thus, "…the functionalist method of European integration seems related to its innovative feature, namely the departure from imperialist goals and centralist means of political community building (De Beus, 2001: 283)." Ultimately, the EU has generated an overall expansion in many facilities that could not be achieved in any regular state model, where the backbone of such expansion relies mostly on attitudes and beliefs (Dekker et al., 2003: 345-376).

The fourth variable, Psychology, is rationalized through the Social-Psychological approach. This theoretical approach is identified in being structured upon two theories, the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Hogg, 2006: 111) and the Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (De Cremer, 2004: 318). Both theories interpret identity as being based on both motivational and cognitive factors for the sake of merging the identity of the self within a group identity mold where "…the superior image provided by the European integration will naturally bring a European identity (Fan, 2008: 414-415)." Moreover, the formulation of in-group integration – such as the EU – is exemplified in the study of De Cremer (2004) that describes how the merging of the self within an in-group structure may lead to self-expansion and therefore depersonalization where strong feelings of belongingness and high merging conditions may lead to homogeneity and self-group assimilation (De Cremer, 2004: 316-325).

The fifth variable in affecting the EU project is Communication, rationalized through the Social-Constructivism approach, which "…emphasizes [on] communication and social learning (Fan, 2008: 415)." Communication played an essential role in affecting the formation of the European unity project. As indicated in the EB research survey, European citizens are affected by media in responding to the EU project and favoring it to their national identity (Fan, 2008: 420-421). Moreover, media does function in shaping the world, uniting its cultures and defining identities in the aim of achieving similarity through a globalized world model (Kellner, 1995: 9).

Another study, pertaining to the Social-Constructivism approach, is conducted through the EB survey analyzing people's perceptions towards the EU in relation to their types of communities – classified as big towns, small towns and rural villages. The results demonstrate that citizens are not so much affected with the European unity regarding the size of their community (Fan, 2008: 421).

In his analysis, Fan (2008) links this survey to the survey examining the effects of media on the European society assuming that "…the more frequently people contact with media and the bigger the community people live [in], the more they will be affected by social communication (Fan, 2008: 421)." Consequently, the results of both studies – when analyzed together – appear to be controversial rendering the effects of media on European unity rather inconsistent.

The sixth and final variable, Institution, is rationalized through the Neo-Institutionalism approach that is based on the effects of institutions in rendering identities apt for social/political change. "Since identity is the relations between citizens and various levels of political entities, citizens' membership in certain institutions and their political participation will doubtlessly affect the formation of identity (Fan, 2008: 415)." Institutions, therefore, are considered fundamental in implementing social and political practices that may be originated through rules and traditions. Thus, institutions are able to, "…forge certain types of values and culture; by developing practices and routines, they induce people's behavior and thinking; ultimately they will change the human behavior and new identifications will gradually be formed (Fan, 2008: 415)."

The results of this study are based on the previously analyzed independent variables (Benefit, Function, Psychology, Communication and Institution, with the Ethno-Cultural Heritage as their founding base) that have been detected through the previously mentioned theoretical approaches (the Rational Choice approach, the Functionalist approach, the Social-Psychological approach, the Social-Constructivism approach, the Neo-Institutionalism approach and the Essentialist Approach)(Fan, 2008: 415-416).

Consequently, the results indicate (as per the EB surveys) that Benefit and Institution are the only direct factors affecting the formation of the EU. Benefit through its utilitarian concept for better economy and welfare; Institutions for their essential role in political participation. As for the remaining variables, Function, Psychology and Communication, their effects appear to be indirect in the process of creating a unified European identity, given that, they act only as channels for the facilitation of the EU structure while maintaining the Ethno-Cultural Heritage as founding base (Fan, 2008: 424).

4.0   Arab identity vs. European identity: A brief comparison

Comparing Arab identity vis-à-vis European identity necessitates an interpretation of several factors initiating both identities. To be able to translate the existing settings of both modules, Arab identity and European identity, a brief observation on the effects of the previously mentioned independent variables (Ethno-Cultural Heritage, Benefit, Institution, Function, Psychology and Communication) is suggested.

By comparing Arab and European identities in terms of Ethno-Culture Heritage, it is evident that the major differences between both societies are perceived through language and religion. The Arab world has one common language, Arabic, which is considered as a cornerstone in initiating Arab identity, that is why"…due credit is always given to the unrivalled power of the Arabic language (Abdel Rahim, 2005: 43-44)." Europe, however, is a multi-linguistic society where"…different European nations…speak 67 languages (not counting the dialects) (Borman and Fowler, 1997: 487)." Ironically, however, a controversial idea here begs interrogation. How was the existence of the actual European unification – though built upon many different languages – made possible, whilst no potential plan for Arab unification is even existent? Max Weber provides an analysis indicating that language is not the sole initiator for national unification.

> Max Weber spells out this principle by emphasizing three facets of the language – national identity link: (1) "a 'nation' is not identical with a community speaking the same language"; (2) "a common language does not seem to be absolutely necessary to a 'nation'"; and (3) "some language groups do not think of themselves as a separate 'nation'". It also means that language is but one marker of national identity among a set of markers which may include such attributes as territory, common culture and descent, shared memories and so on (Suleiman, 2003: 30–31).

Concerning religion, the Arab world is "…a region where religion largely defines not just faith but also personal identity, so how Muslims and Christians see each other affects politics, economics and much more (Abdel Rahim, 2005: 41)." However, as previously mentioned, Muslim people are predominant in the Arab world (90% of its population) (Abdel Rahim, 2005: 41). That is why "…for the Arab Muslim majority, the consciousness of belonging to a religious community was [and still is] the basis of their

political and social obligations (Farah, 1963: 149)." This explains the reason why Islam defines Arab identity to a large extent.

Regarding the effects of religion on the European identity, Fan's (2008) study demonstrates that religion does not define it. "If the common religion does serve as the foundation of European identity, then Roman Catholics and Protestants should have more positive attitude towards European unification (Fan, 2008: 418)." Moreover, as indicated by the EB empirical analysis, no correlation exists between the effects of religious affiliations (whether Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Buddhists, Jewish or Muslims) and European unification (Fan, 2008: 418-419).

In order to comprehend the European ideology in terms of religion, it is upon the essence of Christianity that one must look. The foundation of Christianity has long been based on a doctrine that separates the state from religion as presented by Saint Augustine in 420 A.D.

> The Christian doctrine on this point went back to the saying gathered from Jesus, that one should render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's and to God those that were God's. The same dualism was presented more systematically by St. Augustine about A.D. 420 in the *City of God*, than which few books have been more influential in shaping the later development of Western civilization…There were, he said, really two "cities," the earthly and the heavenly, the temporal and the eternal, the city of man and the City of God… [Thus] the spiritual and political power were held to be separate and independent (Palmer, 1963: 12).

Furthermore, the essence of religion and language are metaphorically interrelated in each of both identities; the Arab identity and the European identity. For the Arabs it is due to the Holy Qur'an that Arabic language is revered. The Qur'an refers many times to the significance of the Arabic language as mentioned in the revelation of Joseph (Sûrat Yussuf, 12:2): "Lo! We have revealed it, a Lecture in Arabic, that ye may understand (The Glorious Qur'an, 1996: 235 - Sourat Joseph, chapter 12, verse 2)."

As for the Europeans, Levinas (1994) acknowledges that:

> Europe is the Bible and the Greeks…Greek is the term I use to designate, above and beyond the vocabulary, grammar and wisdom with which it originated in Hellas, the manner in which the universality of the west is expressed, or tries to express itself […]. It is a language without prejudice […]. It is a language that is at once a metalanguage, careful and able to protect what is said from the structures of the language itself, which might lay claim to being the very categories of meaning. A language which intends to translate – ever anew – the Bible itself […] (Levinas, 1994: 133–135; as quoted by Ponzio, 2008:37).

In some way, the same idea presented by Levinas (1994) was quoted by Charles de Gaulle while referring to the French race and nationhood: "We are after all primarily a European people of the white race, of Greek and Latin culture, and of the Christian faith (Auster, 2005)."

The next variables that will be examined are Function and Benefit. While analyzing the effects of Function and Benefit on both the Arab and European identities, dissimilarity is perceived. Arabs and Europeans view benefits and acquire functions differently.

For Arabs, the necessity of personal benefits has always come before state and citizenship benefits. This is due to their innate concerns that operate upon a trade mentality that has long prevented them from shifting their attachment to a wider supra-national state entity. Arabs, in their modes of behavior, have always shown compliancy to weak economic structures that led them, unceasingly, to an unbalanced system of income distribution. It is important to mention, also, that Arab countries make very high profits from oil surpluses that are spent to the advantages of Arab leaders (Halliday, 1996:34). Consequently, the economic situation in the Arab countries is handled upon major corruptions that include, "… growing income inequality, rampant corruption in the state(s), grandiose development projects, neglect of productive activity and skills… (Halliday, 1996:34)."

Europeans, however, aim for the advancement of the functions that bring benefits to their own nations. They seek high profits for the expansion of their nation state structure, aspiring, thus, higher levels of education, currency, welfare and environmental policies (Fan, 2008: 418). This has led them to the formation of an effective EU model.

By analyzing the variable Psychology, in terms of the Arab and European mode of thinking, we realize that both are in complete contrast. Arab people do not think independently, their opinions and actions portray them as followers of authorities. The Europeans, however, were culturally brought up to think and analyze in accordance with their own beliefs and reasoning.

> Whereas Western societies have for centuries delegated a large degree of moral autonomy to the individual, such phenomenon has not become widespread in the Arab world... There have certainly been innovative and free thinking, Arabs, as well as Westerners who submit blindly to authority but it is probably accurate to say that individual reasoning (even in the absence of much knowledge) is a more highly prized characteristic in Europe and America than in the Arab world (Alterman, 1999).

Consequently, by evaluating the formation of in-group belongingness, it is logical to consider that non-independent thinking tends to favor the development of sub-national identities whilst independent thinking tends to encourage rational pursuit of benefit, which obviously can be found in supra-national identity aspirations.

The next variable, communication, is perceived differently within both societies. For Arabs, the Arabic language serves as a channel for message interpretation, while for the Europeans it is mostly through the context that communication is given access. Europeans with their multilingual society do not have the luxury of connection through one common language.

Through the advancement of media and with the arrival of satellite TV and Internet, wider scopes of communication have been granted to the Arab world where communication boundaries have been demolished giving access to more noticeable interconnectedness among various Arab societies as indicated in the following article written by Rabih Khoury in the Daily Star (a Lebanese newspaper) on the 29th of March 2004:

> According to official statistics, more than 80%of Lebanese youth have caught Star Academy fever. Even in the Gulf region, the show is popular , although many communities have criticized the program because it does not conform to local traditions. Yet, a significant proportion of the population watches the program, despite criticism. This is reflected in the large number of votes for the Kuwaiti and Saudi contestants, largely by the citizens of their own countries...Now that the program is coming to an end even nationalities are becoming less and less important. People from Kuwait are not backing the Kuwaiti contesting. The same is true for Egypt and Tunisia. Now it is not patriotism, but personal preference that decides who the people back (Khoury, 2004).

Concerning the effects of media on European unification, media did not act as basic tools in uniting European people, as indicated by the EB survey (Fan, 2008: 420-421). However, according to Habermas (1988), "Mass communication helps people forge common feelings (Habermas, 1988: 8)." Such feelings were identified in terms of collective positivism towards EU integration and became valid through media exposure (Fan, 2008: 420-421). Consequently, although Europeans communicate through different languages, it is within the context of the 'Imagined Community' concept, developed by Anderson (2006), that they are supposedly connected, as this concept corresponds to the period of enlightenment in Europe that was characterized by the introduction of print capitalism which produced new communication forms – from newspapers to novels – and which led to a media revolution that has served as a vehicle in reinforcing in the minds of Europeans images of their communion (Anderson, 2006: 6, 44).

The final variable to be analyzed, in terms of its function on Arab and European identity, is Institution and is defined as follows: "Institutions are the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction… Throughout history, institutions have been devised by human beings to create order and reduce uncertainty in exchange (North, 1991: 97)."

Within the Arab society, and throughout Arab history, the word institution has never gained value. Its sole existence, within the common Arab lexicon, has always been in form and image, lacking, thus, functional essence in a world where dictators rule causing unbalanced political, social and economical regulations. As an example is the Arab League, that has been inefficient from the moment of its birth in 1945 (Kramer, 1993: 183).

European institutions, however, proved to be much more functional serving as a basis to the foundation of the EU configuration. Through institutions, Europeans were able to participate in political elections which gave them tangible access to the EU formation. This has, also, given them a chance to express their will, politically, socially and economically, (Fan, 2008: 422-424) "…affecting [, thus,] the formation of European identity (Fan, 2008: 424)."

5.0   Conclusion

Through the comparison performed in this study, the original multi-dimensional identity framework analysis has proven to be comprehensive and efficient in understanding the underlying roots of identity formations. Effectively, the apparently incoherent situation of the status of Arab transnational identity, in comparison to the European one, finds its explanation in the outcome of the performed comparison. As it appears, clearly, both identities function through contrasting measures within the perspective of unification. According to the European identity, the most effective variables are Institution and Benefit (Fan, 2008: 421), whereas, for the Arab identity, Arab people can rely, mainly, on Communication that is founded upon the Ethno-Cultural Heritage, which is based mostly on language and religion. Even though the above-mentioned outcome could have been sensed intuitively, the usage of our multi-dimensional framework has provided us with the necessary rational to understand the underlying mechanisms of such outcome. Moreover, our framework could be used as a base in the construction of identity formation enhancement strategies.

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