



# The Role of Radio and Umm Kulthum's Voice in Spreading Nasserite Arab Nationalism

*Nasırcı Arap Milliyetçiliğinin Yayılmasında Radyonun ve Ümmü Gülsüm'ün Sesinin Rolü*

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## **The Role of Radio and Umm Kulthum's Voice in Spreading Nasserite Arab Nationalism**

### **Abstract**

Gamal Abdel Nasser, who ascended to power via a military coup, espoused socialist-oriented facets of Arab nationalism after he assumed government. For Nasser to effectively disseminate Arab nationalism beyond the confines of national boundaries, he needed to possess potent political propaganda instruments. During the era of Nasser, radio broadcasts and musical compositions emerged as very influential means of propaganda, prompting substantial investments in financial and material resources. Umm Kulthum's vocal prowess emerged as particularly prominent in endorsing Nasser's Arab nationalism endeavour, surpassing the contributions of other artists whose vocal abilities were employed. This study aims to examine the dissemination of Nasser's Arab nationalism during the 1950s and 1960s, employing propaganda tactics such as Umm Kulthum's vocal prowess and the Voice of Arabs radio. This paper examines the various dimensions of Umm Kulthum's contribution to disseminating Arab Nasserite nationalism by focusing on five key aspects. Firstly, it explores the utilisation of soft power as a means to disseminate political ideals and foster a shared sense of identity. Secondly, it delves into the role of Nasser's nationalism and radio broadcasts in this process. Thirdly, it investigates the radio as a tool for political propaganda in support of Nasser. Fourthly, it analyses Umm Kulthum's instrumental role in promoting Nasserite Arab nationalism. Lastly, it assesses the impact of Umm Kulthum's vocal prowess on the proliferation of Nasserite nationalism throughout the Arab world.

**Key Words:** Arab Nationalism, Soft Power, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Umm Kulthum.

## **Nasırcı Arap Milliyetçiliğinin Yayılmasında Radyonun ve Ümmü Gülsüm'ün Sesinin Rolü**

### **Öz**

Askeri bir darbeyle iktidara gelen Cemal Abdülnasır, hükümeti devrıldıktan sonra sosyalizmle karışık Arap milliyetçiliği ideolojisini benimsedi. Nasır'ın Arap milliyetçiliğini ulusal sınırların ötesine etkili bir şekilde yayabilmesi için güçlü siyasi propaganda araçlarına sahip olması gerekiyordu. Bu anlamda Nasır döneminde, radyo yayınları ve müzik besteleri çok etkili propaganda araçları olarak ortaya çıktı ve Nasır mali ve maddi kaynaklara önemli yatırımlar yapılmasını teşvik etti. Özellikle de Ümmü Gülsüm'ün ses yeteneği, Nasır'ın Arap milliyetçiliğini yayma çabalarını desteklemede öne çıktı ve Ümmü Gülsüm'ün sesi, bu alanda etkin ve ses yetenekleri kullanılan diğer sanatçıların etkisini geride bıraktı. Bu makale, 1950'ler ve 1960'lar boyunca Nasır'ın Arap milliyetçiliğini Ortadoğu'da yayma noktasında Ümmü Gülsüm'ün sesini ve Arapların Sesi Radyosu'nu yumuşak güç unsuru olarak kullandığını iddia etmektedir. Bu kapsamda çalışma, Ümmü Gülsüm'ün Nasırcı Arap milliyetçiliğinin yayılmasına yaptığı katkının çeşitli boyutlarını beş temel hususa odaklanarak incelemektedir. İlk olarak, yumuşak gücün siyasi idealleri yaymak ve ortak bir kimlik duygusu geliştirmek için bir araç olarak kullanımını araştırmaktadır. İkinci olarak, Nasır tipi milliyetçiliğin ve radyo yayınlarının bu süreçteki rolünü irdelemektedir. Üçüncüsü, radyonun Nasır'ı desteklemek için nasıl bir siyasi propaganda aracı olduğunu araştırmaktadır. Dördüncü olarak, Ümmü Gülsüm'ün Nasırcı Arap milliyetçiliğini teşvik etmedeki araçsal rolünü analiz etmektedir. Son olarak, Ümmü Gülsüm'ün ses yeteneğinin Arap dünyasında Nasırcı milliyetçiliğin yayılması üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Arap Milliyetçiliği, Yumuşak Güç, Cemal Abdülnasır, Ümmü Gülsüm.

## **Introduction**

Renowned Egyptian author Abbas Mahmoud al-Aqqad states, "Umm Kulthum proved that singing is not only the art of throats and mouths but also the art of minds and hearts," a statement sums up Umm Kulthum's importance in addressing rationality and emotion. Umm Kulthum's way of addressing the mind and the heart is an advantage that Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime would not have missed in employing her resounding voice in the corridors of the houses, cafes, and theatres of the Arab world and politics. Gamal Abdel Nasser is associated with Arab nationalism since he was the most famous Arab leader to call for this approach. His ideology transformed into a theoretical and practical thought applied by himself first in Egypt and then throughout the Arab world, thus engraving his name as the most influential Arab leader in spreading Arab nationalism.

On July 23, 1952, the Free Officers Movement led by Gamal Abdul Nasser, an officer in the Egyptian army, staged a coup against King Farouk I, ending the monarchy of Egypt. This marked the start of republican rule and thus started the era of Nasser and the Arab nationalist imbued with the spirit of socialism. Many Arab nationalist movements emerged towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, Nasser became the most charismatic and influential leader in the Arab world due to his skilful use of radio, press, cinema, and famous. Nasser leaned towards establishing a homogeneous Arab cultural identity through propaganda campaigns (Domenach, 1995, 74). Music and songs have long been used in nation-building. For example, Fairuz played a critical role in building the Lebanese identity in Lebanon (Turan, 2011, 200). Therefore, it can be stated that regimes have been exploiting and instrumentalizing music and radio as soft power tools in Middle Eastern politics.

Umm Kulthum began her singing career in 1921 when Egypt was under a monarchy. The reputation and voice of Umm Kulthum reached large segments of the Arab people before the outbreak of the Free Officers Movement. After the revolution's success, Nasser paid attention to this reputation. On this basis, the relationship of official cooperation began between Nasser as one of the organizational elites and Umm Kulthum as one of the functional elites continued since she was dubbed "The Voice of Egypt" (Turan, 2006, 311). Umm Kulthum's popularity surpassed Egypt and engulfed the entire Middle East. Her song affected daily life and politics (Rachy, 2003, 12). Danielson (1998, 111-114) argued that Umm Khultum's music has an outstanding share in the spread of Nasserism on the Arab streets. After 1954, Umm Kulthum's voice was employed in consolidating the political values of Nasser's regime since Arab masses were united by history, geography, culture, and the spirit of struggle against colonial powers. Umm Kulthum and several of her songs empowered political propaganda in favor of Nasser's regime. The songs that Umm Kulthum sang touched on Arab nationalism and focused on symbolizing Nasser as the leader of Arabs and elevating the status of the Egyptian army as the Arab army that works for the liberation of Arabs from oppression and occupation.

This study examines the role of radio and Umm Kulthum in spreading Arab Nasserite nationalism from 1954 to 1967. In this sense, the study argues that Umm Kulthum's voice and Arab Radio program were quite effective as a soft power element in spreading Nasser's ideology. Consequently, the paper is devoted to answering the following questions: What is the role Umm Kulthum played in favor

of Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime to spread its political values based on the approach of Arab nationalism? What is the definition of soft power, and how is it used as a tool to establish political values and a common identity? How did Gamal Abdel Nasser's Arab nationalism arise? What role did the radio play as a political propaganda tool for Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime? How was Umm Kulthum chosen to be a functional tool in spreading Arab Nasserite nationalism? What are the most essential songs of Umm Kulthum that were employed in favor of the thought of Arab nationalism? What is the impact of Umm Kulthum's songs on shaping the identity of other Arab people?

Contemporary Middle Eastern literature on the topic has been about the foundations of nationalism laid down by Gamal Abdel Nasser in the early 1950s. Still, the literature lacks several studies dealing with the methods and mechanisms of spreading this thought on an influential Arab level. Thus, the study attempts to fill the gap in the literature by addressing the voice of Umm Kulthum as a tool for spreading Arab nationalism under Nasser. Hence, the importance of the study stems as the matter has yet to be previously dealt with in the framework of an academic study. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical approach to get the most significant possible number of details related to the subject and then analyze it in a scientific manner that elicits evidence about the role of Umm Kulthum and her songs in contributing to the spread of Arab nationalism during the era of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Moreover, the paper uses the case study method as an approach to extract Arabic articles, books, op-eds, newspapers, videos, and songs. The study is limited to the period of Nasser's rule. In addition, only the elements related to cultural identities, such as radio, music, and singers, were discussed among the soft power elements.

### **1. Soft Power and Common Identity Formation as a Dissemination Tool of Political Values**

Soft power as a concept was termed in the late 80s. However, the effect and tools of this concept date back to the beginning of the 20th century. The person who instrumentalized soft power seriously and effectively was Paul Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister of German President Hitler. At that time, Goebbels, who prepared effective slogans and propaganda discourses for Hitler with great care, tended to use the radio effectively so that he could reach everywhere easily. Hitler was successful in getting his ideas accepted by the public in his radio speeches before and during the war (Kasım, 2011, 64-67). After the second world war, many media experts and politicians followed the path of Goebbels. As media tools have developed, states have always used them to show their soft power, and it is most likely that they will continue to use them. With the development of communication tools and war technology, the idea of changing the way of using force has become widespread among the actors.

Joseph Nye coined the term soft power in the late 1980s. He discussed this concept in detail in his book "Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics" (Nye, 2004), and then in his book "The Future of Power" (Nye, 2010, 30). In the first book, Nye (2004, 30) explains that the information age and globalization have changed the concept of power. According to Nye (2004, 5), the concept of power is an essential area for influencing, attracting and provoking others without threats and economic pressures. He stated that this power is based on essential elements such as inspiring leader, cultural system, art, media, cultural political

values, and political morality. He explains that it includes other elements that attract others, enabling them to produce consent in line with the desires of the power holder (Nye, 2004, 28).

According to Nye, in the last book, the concept of soft power became clear based on the following three grounds. First is the country's culture, other countries, directing them towards their policies and tendencies through culture, art, and media and forcing or persuading them to accept. Second, the political values formed within a sound system depends on the domestic and foreign policies of the state. Third, foreign policy ethics will give moral spirit and legitimacy to their actions and activities in the international arena (Al-Halimi, 2020).

Nye considered that using soft power is consistent with the realist concept of power. Instead, it sees it simply as a form of power or a means by which the desired goals are achieved. Referring to Edward Hallett Carr's 1939 classification of classical realism, Nye argues that soft power does not contradict realism. For Carr, power is divided into three categories: military power, economic power, and power controlling public opinion (Nye, 2004, 8). Based on this inference, Nye can be described as a 'realist liberal' or a 'liberal realist' (Nye, 2004, 8). Likewise, what demonstrates Nye's realism is that he initially referred to soft power with the term 'non-coercive power of subjugation' (Al-Koud, 2016, 12).

According to Shils, society consists of two components. Prestigious groups and institutions, called elites, take the primary role in convincing the periphery that the center still adheres to general values or that a particular center is most committed to central values. Shils, the elite, is divided into two (Tuncel - Gündoğmuş, 2012, 141-142). The first is the organizational elite. In this segment, some politicians and leaders can make elite decisions and directives and ensure their implementation. The second is the instrumental elite. In this section, some elites defend the correctness of the decisions and directives desired to be implemented by making various persuasion methods and embellishments. These can be journalists, writers, singers, etc. Tools such as seminars, associations, newspapers, radio, and television are where the instrumental elite is concentrated and present.

At the end of the media propaganda campaigns, any political regime seeks to establish an identity that is the common phenomenon unifying the language, culture and political orientation of a society intended to be homogeneous under the banner of a regime that runs the media propaganda campaigns. The goal of establishing identity lies in the human need to join a banner of a material and moral identity through which they can define themselves and feel proud and belong to the inclusive ethnic, religious, historical, linguistic, and cultural affiliation (Bilen - Tanar, 2015, 34-35).

In a way that supports the concept of soft power and the establishment of a common identity, reference is made to the concept of "popular culture", which contains the methods or tools of political discourse in circulation, and through these methods and tools, popular culture is formed and spread. Music is one of the most essential tools of popular culture, for it carries the spirit of pleasure for listeners and impacts their unconscious, which turns into a collective unconscious that forms popular culture (Abaoğlu, 2018, 35). Its product is the common identity linked to a political organizational elite that harnesses soft power, including music, in a way that serves its interests in convincing the masses of what it wants

them to be convinced of (Malinowski, 1992, 66). Popular culture has come to be referred to as a system that establishes a cultural identity that spreads among the general public and its classes through technological tools and functional elites to create a state of permanent circulation that becomes a widespread phenomenon. After the establishment and dissemination of popular culture, here is the first element of soft power that Nye spoke of. After the establishment of culture, the state tends towards consolidating the concept of soft power by employing culture artistically and in the media to serve the orientations of its foreign policies. Based on that, one proceeds towards establishing political values to endow the movements of foreign relations with an ethical feature and political legitimacy acceptable to the targeted society or societies (Al-Halimi, 2020).

### **1.1. Radio as Abdul Nasser's Propaganda Tool**

The Voice of the Arabs radio station was launched with the aim of mobilizing the Arab spirit towards achieving the United Arab Republic, which brings together all Arab countries under one banner. The Voice of the Arabs radio station defined its main goal in a report broadcast in 1956, in which it said: "The main goal of the Voice of the Arabs radio station is to create a force that creates a popular awareness that is keen on ending colonialism and the presence of imperialist forces throughout the Arab world. We aim to liberate our Arab brothers from the occupying powers. Our goal is not to promote the government but to raise the awareness of the Arab masses. Our motive is that we are people with a common history and intersecting desires." (Smith, 1956).

The radio was established at the suggestion of the Minister of Information, Mohammed Abdel-Kader Hatem, in 1953, and Nasser personally supported and supervised its establishment. The architect of political values in the Voice of the Arabs radio station was Ahmed Saeed, who worked as the leading broadcaster and director of the Voice of the Arabs radio station from 1953 until 1967 (Nabih, 2020). The political values on which the Voice of the Arabs was based revolved around the concept of Arab unity and brotherhood, the unity of history and destiny, anti-colonialism, and support for the Arab revolutions against the monarchy, which was described as reactionary, and all of these values were echoed through the speeches of Nasser and elite programs with songs by several singers. Considering these values, the Voice of the Arabs became the broadcast of a large spectrum of Arabs who saw in it the voice of the resistance to colonialism in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Palestine, as well as the form of the media force in the Yemen revolution, the liberation movement of southern Yemen, as well as support for the independence movement in the Gulf states (Nabih, 2020).

Nasser formed a political approach for Egypt in the international arena through these values. That approach became acceptable in the Arab arena, mainly through Syria joining Egypt and accepting the Yemeni Republicans with Egyptian forces in Sana'a. Likewise, the significant influence of the Voice of the Arabs radio station is credited with mobilizing large crowds of the Iraqi army against the Baghdad Security Pact, which was established in 1955, including the United Kingdom, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, as the radio attacked the alliance vigorously, until 1958 when a group of "Free Officers" moved in the Iraqi army (Saghieh, 2013, 102-104). Whenever Nasser achieved national success in international politics in the dimension of the Middle East, the duration of the Voice of the Arabs broadcast reached 15 hours, only four hours when the radio was first launched. Therefore,

Nasser's usage of radio as a soft power tool successfully reached Arab houses (Alahamad, 2011, 16). Nasser's success with Voice of the Arabs was mentioned in a report issued by the White House at that time, as the report indicated that the listeners to this radio were not only from the public but also from the powerful elite, as the report recommended the establishment of a strong radio station to confront it (Joyce, 2003, 16). The aforementioned thesis explains how Nasser's regime proceeded in applying the elements of soft power mentioned by Joseph Nye, from the use of cultural platforms and the establishment of political values to the establishment of a robust political approach in the international arena, making Egypt a central state that influences the paths of the political life of sub-Arab countries.

Through these steps, Gamal Nasser's regime established a solid cultural institution that embraced the elite working to sow the seeds of organic cultural belonging throughout the Arab world in favor of Nasser's project of Arab nationalism. Nasser was convinced of the Arab Radio experience and its influence during the fifties because it succeeded in showing it as the only tool capable of uniting Arabs and achieving their interests (Boyd, 1977, 10-13). This prompted him to remove the management of Voice of the Arabs Radio from the Ministry of Information and link it directly to the Presidency of the Republic so that it remains under his direct management. Nasser even responded to the objection from the General Secretariat of the United Nations to the Voice of the Arabs radio station by saying: "The restriction on the radio... means leaving me armless." (Jankowski, 2002, 55).

### **1.2. Umm Kulthum as a means of spreading nationalism**

Nasser became convinced of the power of songs in mobilizing people's power, especially songs, after the success of an enthusiastic song in raising motivation during the tripartite aggression against Egypt. The song "God is greater than the plot of the aggressor... God is the best supporter for the oppressed... Leave my sky, it is a holocaust" carries elements of exclusivity of feelings of religion and national affiliation. A song with the weight of its words and melody unleashed the popular force in the cities in confrontation with the forces of the tripartite aggression in a remarkable way. Instead, it fueled the determination until it became the national anthem of Libya to this day and was even a distinctive badge for Radio Baghdad to open its programs with (Shalaby, 2011). This song's success prompted Nasser's regime to work vigorously on employing songs to mobilize emotions in favor of the Arab national project and to establish a strong influence throughout the Arab lands. Umm Kulthum was one of the most famous elite artists of that era, and she was an essential element in the project of soft power influence of the Nasser regime.

Fatima El-Beltagi, known as Umm Kulthum, was born in 1898. Her singing career began in 1921, and she sang during the period of royal rule in Egypt, but she gained a limited reputation. At the beginning of the thirties of the twentieth century, Umm Kulthum got the fame she aspired to by singing to the king, and she was the first to sing on the Egyptian radio when it opened on May 31, 1934. In the same year, Umm Kulthum's songs began to be broadcast every Thursday evening that precedes the official holiday for Arabs, Friday, which made a crowd of Egyptians and Arabs catching the Cairo Voice signal eagerly await her songs. In 1943, she founded the first Syndicate of Musicians and remained its head until 1952. That

stage made Umm Kulthum one of the most important names in the Arab world, even before the July Revolution (Al-Jazeera.net, 2014).

When the Revolution broke out in 1952, Umm Kulthum was prevented from singing on the radio, her songs were also banned from broadcasting, and she was expelled from her position at the Musicians Syndicate, given that she was a singer of the defunct era. These decisions were taken individually by the officer in charge of the radio, meaning that the Revolutionary Leadership Council did not issue them. Gamal Abdel Nasser learned of the matter, so he quickly decided to cancel these procedures. However, Umm Kulthum had revealed to those around her that she had retired from singing.

Following her decision to retire, Nasser headed a delegation from the Revolutionary Command Council to persuade her to change her mind, which greatly affected Umm Kulthum and brought her back to singing; instead, it created a strong admiration for Nasser as a person who seemed to be a planner and aware of the importance of Umm Kulthum in his project from the first moment for the success of the July Revolution, of which he was considered the actual leader.

Umm Kulthum recorded many songs that became the most broadcast on Radio Cairo and the Voice of the Arabs. In 1956, Newsweek described her as the queen of Arab countries in singing, as she is the beloved favorite voice, to show that the employment of the organizational elite represented by Nasser for the voice of Umm Kulthum which is classified as an element of the functional elite, resulted in an excellent service to the Nasser regime in establishing its political values as the central values of the masses of the Arab world (Dawisha, 2003, 142-144).

The title of Umm Kulthum was 'the daughter of the countryside', and this title was widely used in the media and popularly, which raised the status of Umm Kulthum in the eyes and hearts of the Arabs. Since the majority is from the rural lower class, this was an essential element in facilitating the task of forming a popular, national, cultural Arab identity that becomes increasingly intertwined with every song that Umm Kulthum utters through the Voice of the Arabs (Lohman, 2010, 134).

Nasser's nationalism was based on the unity of history, geography, and culture and the spirit of struggle against colonial powers united the Arab masses. His goal relied on the premise that political, economic, social, and cultural tools should be used to unify these ties and direct them toward close unity. Nasser believed in the effectiveness of popular culture curricula targeting the middle and lower classes. The popular culture curricula adopted the radio, whose mainstay was directed programs and songs that carried the spirit of grief that attracted the masses. Umm Kulthum's voice was the backbone of this spirit (Kireççi, 2012, 126- 131).

### **1.2.1. Umm Kulthum's voice and songs as a propaganda tool**

Umm Kulthum was powerful propaganda for Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime. She was called the Planet of the East because of her great status among the masses of the Arab world. She was also awarded several awards from Arab countries, including the Medal of the Republic of Tunisia, the Medal of Merit of the First Class from the Syrian Republic, and the Supreme Medal of the Cedar in Lebanon. In addition to the popularity of her voice and her soft singing influence in favor of Egypt during the reign of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the strong relationship between Umm Kulthum and Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime resulted in a package of songs that increased the importance of Umm Kulthum's functional role in favor of defining Nasser's project in the leadership of Arab nationalism. That was observed

through assigning a program that broadcasts Umm Kulthum's songs constantly at ten o'clock every evening. Over time, and after Cairo started noticing that Umm Kulthum's voice attracted millions, Umm Kulthum's songs were broadcasted at five in the evening as well, and sometimes her songs were broadcasted in the early morning, at nine and ten (Abu Hamila, 2022).

Songs, melodies, and lyrics are a force that gathers the feelings of the masses around the center that guides them perfectly. The state of mass mobilization is increasing around songs and anthems addressing the feelings of patriotism among people fighting wars for liberation and independence. Umm Kulthum was the voice of the goal Nasser sought to mobilize Arabs around him (Anderson, 1995: 16). Umm Kulthum was the voice of Arab unity for Arabs at that time, as a large spectrum of Arabs believed that the borders of the national states that were drawn after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War were imaginary borders. There was nostalgia for the state of Arab unity. Hence, the star, Umm Kulthum, rose with a unique melodious voice that brought Arabs back to their unity and brought them together by listening to her every evening from Manama to Casablanca; a voice that conquered borders and re-documented the cultural and linguistic ties between the Arabs (Danielson, 1998, 100-115).

Umm Kulthum was interested in choosing poetic words written by the most important poets and songwriters of that era, words that contained the spirit of Arab unity and of which Umm Kulthum's singing style deepened the meaning and her melodious voice. The songs that Umm Kulthum sang and that affected and directed Arab nationalism are many, and Umm Kulthum's career began before Gamal Abdel Nasser assumed power in Egypt. An example is the song of the Nile, whose lyrics were written by the poet Ahmed Shawqi in 1946 and composed by Riad Al Sunbati to be sung by Umm Kulthum in 1948; the song came to praise King Farouk's project to establish the Aswan Dam project to generate electricity, and through it, the national ties between Egypt and Sudan were revived.

*Despite being there for ages, you are (the Nile River) still full of water, and your delicious Eastern basins are still flowing.*

*You provide those who come to you with water and food tirelessly and relentlessly.*

*The water you pour is as precious as gold; the earth drowns in it, and those drowned come back to life.*

After Abdel Nasser assumed power and returned Umm Kulthum to sing on the radio, he called her the Fourth Pyramid of Egypt. The first song that Umm Kulthum sang during the era of the "Free Officers" was: "Egypt in My Mind", which was intended as a prelude to Egypt's leadership of Arabs, as it addressed Arabs' feelings for Egypt as the country of Arabism and their ship to sail the sea of wandering towards safety, independence, and liberation. This can be seen by the lyrics of the song begging for the love of Egypt for Arabs, as the song was in classical Arabic words that tickled the feelings of all Arabs understandably.

*Egypt is in my mind, and my mouth*

*I love her with all my soul and blood*

*Egypt is in my mind, and my mouth*

*I love her with all my soul and blood*

*I wish every believer in her glory would love her*

Umm Kulthum's voice was also used to raise the prestige of the Egyptian army, to reach the rank of the army that represents all Arabs. This song came in 1959; That is, a year after the unification of Syria and Egypt within the framework of the United Arab Republic, and the regime of Nasser aimed to raise the status of the army so that there would be a popular embrace of this army as the army of the Arabs that would protect their interests and defend them against the dangers of external aggression lurking against them, whether from Israel or any Western country.

What we have referred to vis-a-vis the goals of Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime regarding the aforementioned song is evident in the lyrics of the song itself, which say:

*Glory walked in his big day  
And shone in his Eid and did not set  
Stand up, salute your army, the army of the Arabs  
Protector of the blood and army of peace*

The third part of the song describes the army, in the strong voice of Umm Kulthum, as the army of all Arabs, meaning Cairo is the capital of Arabs, and its army is the army of all Arabs and their protector and defender. In another stanza of the song, it is said: The army of Egypt and its soldiers protect Arabism. Here, the Egyptian army is linked to Arabism in the sense that the Egyptian army's orientation, values, and morals are the morals of the Arabs represented in showing tolerance with the peaceful and toughness with the aggressor. During the song, there is a verse that says: Ask Ain Jalut about its past; this carries the meaning of recalling the glories of the Arabs in their ancient Islamic history where the battle of Ain Jalut, in which the Mamluk army defeated the Mongols. The human subconscious gets excited and feels that belonging to the poems that carry the spirit of patriotism and the emotion of nostalgia, and this is what this song aims at doing by addressing the past and linking it to the Egyptian army as an Arab army that carries the goal of solving the issues and concerns of the Arabs, especially the Palestinian cause and the goal of liberating Palestine from the occupation of Israel. In this song, Umm Kulthum's voice moulded the Egyptian army as the Arab army, for whom the army works, trains, and prepares. Here, the extent of the focus on employing music as a soft power in establishing a comprehensive Arab identity within the framework of a directed political discourse that aims to unify Arab hearts, consciousness, subconscious and popular culture under the umbrella of the Egyptian Arab state led by the nationalist leader Nasser becomes clear.

As for the song that Umm Kulthum sang to symbolize Nasser as the leader of patriotism and Arab nationalism was: "Oh Gamal... Oh the example of patriotism," released in 1955. With her delicate voice, Umm Kulthum sang that song, striking in the depths of the Arab spirit, so that Nasser and his speech became the most listened to in the Arab world.

*Oh Gamal, oh example of patriotism... the most beautiful Eid of our Egyptian Eids*  
Years after this song, specifically in 1958, Umm Kulthum sang a new song for Nasser, describing him as the hope that befell the Arab world after the long wait, making Nasser an Arab value nested in the Arab subconscious that he is a great leader who came to rid the Arabs of their suffering which was the main feature noticed in all of Umm Kulthum's songs about Gamal Abdel Nasser.

*The song's lyrics say:*

*After long patience, the East got up and spoke*

*We achieved our hopes under your leadership, Gamal*

*The people who raised the flag of Salahuddin*

*Abdel Nasser took an oath, and he fulfilled*

*Happiness accompanies him, the people support him, and God helps him*

*The light of victory is waving, the heart is relieved, and the evil is gone*

*After long patience, we achieved our hopes*

*under your leadership, Gamal*

In the first piece, Umm Kulthum defined Arabs with the word “East” and described this East as years of waiting for a savior until Gamal Abdel Nasser came to make this hope a reality. Hope is an emotional feeling that revives optimism and expectation of positive results. If hope came after years of drought and suffering, there was a solid adherence to this hope. The song says to Arabs, this is Gamal, who came to fulfill your wishes with the hope of retrieving the past; that past, which will be like what Salahuddin al-Ayyubi achieved, who came amid the dispersion and fragmentation of the Muslims, so he was their leader and uniter. Here is a clear cultural link between establishing historical-civilized-behavioral-artistic values in a cultural and musical template.

The same symbolism of leadership was drawn by Umm Kulthum in the song “The Champion of Peace” in the year 1958, as she portrayed Nasser as a heroic Arab leader who strives for peace and freedom. This leader has become faithful to Arab issues, their security, and their future.

Umm Kulthum says in her song about Gamal Abdel Nasser as the hero:

*When our hero speaks... he alerts the east and draws*

*The line of peace and freedom on Arab lands*

*Which became safe for him... Welcome (Oh Gamal) from the bottom of my heart*

Umm Kulthum's tonality increased the sense of Arab identity for many, with her anthem being the national anthem of the United Arab Republic, which came out in 1958 under the name "Keep the weapon awake (ready)." In 1961, the anthem was officially used in the United Arab Republic, and after Syria separated from the United Arab Republic, the anthem remained used in Egypt until 1971.

In another song called “Keep the weapon awake,” Umm Kulthum revived the spirit of revolution and struggled in the audience as she begged for resistance and a blatant challenge to the enemies. There is no way for salvation, independence, freedom, and dignity except through arms and struggle. Umm Kulthum, with her strong and confident voice, threatens the enemy, and the song's lyrics say:

*It has been a long time, O my weapon*

*I miss you in my struggle*

*Speak and say I am awake (ready)*

*O war, it has been a long time*

*It has been a long time, O soldiers*

*Creeping with thunder*

*Who swore to go and not return*

*Except for the big victory  
They called and united the ranks  
They bore the burdens of life  
The enemy will never suffer  
From your fire on the battlefield  
Oh, our glory, oh our glory  
Oh, which we achieved*

In 1961, Umm Kulthum supported the anthem "Keep the weapon awake" with a new song that carries the same rhythm of resistance supporting the struggles of Arab peoples in Algeria, Palestine, and all parts of the Arab world. The meaning of the new song, titled " Revolutionaries... Revolutionaries", aims to emphasize the holiness of the Arab lands by embracing the heavenly Christian and Islamic messages, military, and soft science, art, culture, and religion, leading to the establishment of an independent and unified Arab identity. The song calls on Arabs to follow the same path against anyone who tries to obliterate their identity and deprive them of their rights.

*Revolutionaries, revolutionaries, and, until the end, revolutionaries  
Where we walk, the light comes  
We get up every morning with a new dream  
Revolutionaries, we will bring you back, O victory, and we will do more  
As long as the people of the Arabs supported each other  
The revolution is on, and the struggle continues  
From our land came faith and religion  
Jesus and Muhammad are two immortal revolutions  
Science is a revolution, and it began in her (our lands)  
As well as art, freedom, and urbanization  
Revolutionaries in your name, O history, you will be launched  
We command you; the impossible will come true  
We commend your spaciousness, O space for being filled  
Our step is ahead of time  
As long as the people of the Arabs supported each other  
The revolution is on, and the struggle continues  
Revolutionaries, revolutionaries, and, until the end, revolutionaries  
People are asking for their rights  
The revolution is like the pulse in his veins  
Which today was achieved, and we became satisfied  
And the people with their hard work will achieve more in the future  
Revolutionaries backing the hero whom the fate brought  
We raised our heads proud when he appeared  
We kissed the sky with him (achieved the impossible) and removed the danger  
Determination is firm and determination as well  
And as long as the people of the Arabs are in support of each other*

*The revolution is on, and the struggle continues*

In 1966, the Egyptian voice of Umm Kulthum caressed the patriotic feelings of Kuwaitis with her chanting voice, followed by the voice of the choir that expresses the group, the people, and the nation, as if the intended meaning was linking Kuwait to the Egyptian voice of Umm Kulthum, the voice of the revolution and Nasser (Al-Madani, 2014).

In the song lyrics, there is confirmation that the land of Kuwait is the land of the free, and the free had unique characteristics in that era, as their description depended on Nasser's approach.

The first stanza of the song focuses on this meaning, saying:

*O our home, Oh home*

*O spring of the free*

In the same year, Umm Kulthum sang in a dreamy state of grief, with short vocals for the flute and the oud, where Umm Kulthum's voice was quiet and gentle, igniting feelings of nostalgia for the glories of the past and its loftiness in independence, dignity, and glory (Al-Madani, 2014). The song says:

*Glory and victory sang to you, so the Bedouin swaggered, and the city boasted*

*The land of the ancestors and nights, go on, the monastery did not shine except for you*

*They said, "Kuwait", I said it is a planet that the clouds fall upon when it looks at it*

*Splendor in its yards sprouted, O its produce and trees be blessed*

*The land of the ancestors is still a place in which the moon comes to the minds*

*We lived on your soil after it was helpful to us; it is a love that is destined for our souls*

This song was very important for her to enter the Arab Gulf, which was a monarchy. There was a state of intense tension between Saudi Arabia and Egypt regarding the leadership of the Arab world. With the spread of Umm Kulthum's upscale voice throughout Kuwait and its surroundings from the Gulf countries, Nasser's regime had relative success in achieving its goals of reaching to a number of Arab citizens in the Gulf.

In addition to the patriotic and pan-Arab songs, Umm Kulthum's songs about love and adoration were eagerly awaited. In 1964, Umm Kulthum sang the song "You Are My Life". Although the song was in the context of adoration and love, it was interpreted at the time as if it was sung for Gamal Abdel Nasser and generated solid political propaganda for Nasser's regime.

Song lyrics:

*You are my life, the morning of which started with your light*

*How long of my life before you went and passed*

*O my love, how long of my life is gone?*

*Nor did the heart see one joy before you*

*And it didn't taste in this world other than the taste of wounds*

*I started now, to love my life*

This piece, the romantic song, was understood as flirting with Gamal Abdel Nasser and his regime, so the song was mainly in favor of the soft political propaganda that Nasser's regime was aspiring to, especially since the song spread widely because it a song with a romantic melody that attracts the listeners.

### **1.2.2. The impact of Umm Kulthum's voice on the spread of Nasserite nationalism in the Arab world**

Music extracts relied on enthusiasm and ignited the spirit of pride in the songs of Umm Kulthum and other singers who sang for the victory over the tripartite aggression in Egypt in 1956. Medhat's songs crudely depicted Nasser, his victories, and achievements, as well as songs that dealt with national belonging, adoration, and love and, at the same time, religious songs that included the goal of addressing all classes and segments of society (Loya, 1962, 99-100).

Life magazine stated in its issue in June 1962 that the impact of Umm Kulthum's voice in the Arab world has become like magic that attracts millions, as Arab masses, including merchants, intellectuals, peasants, and all classes and segments of society from Morocco to Bahrain would leave their businesses and the streets at precisely 10 pm to gather around the radio to hear the voice of Umm Kulthum. The magazine also mentioned that many Arabs were keen to buy a radio with the aim of listening to Umm Kulthum's songs, which used to relax the nerves and open the collective subconscious in a very appropriate way to receive the messages hidden within Umm Kulthum's songs or between her lyrics. They devoted eight special concerts to broadcasting Umm Kulthum's songs, each lasting 5 hours. During these five hours, the Arab streets from Casablanca to Baghdad were empty. A considerable influence that Gamal Abdel Nasser would not want to miss.

Another element of the influence of the resounding Voice of the Arabs broadcast with the voice of Umm Kulthum was through Nasser's superiority in his speech over the leaders of other Arab countries that owned radio stations in that era, such as Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. In that era, the voice of the Arabs was heard throughout the Arab world much more than on local radio stations until Nasser became an Arab icon. After that, it was very difficult for Nasser to neglect the Voice of the Arabs radio station and Umm Kulthum's role in the Voice of the Arabs radio station, primarily since some of Nasser's speeches were broadcast between the paragraphs of Umm Kulthum's songs (Boyd, 1975, 648).

The impact of Umm Kulthum within the framework of the national spirit project is not theoretical but was practical, as nearly three thousand letters were received daily on the radio (Alahamad, 2011, 10), 31% of these letters were from Egypt, while the rest of letters were from the rest of the Arab countries, which was apparent with conclusive evidence of the size of the impact Umm Kulthum's voice played in building a unified Arab national identity that prompts millions of Arabs to send daily letters to her. The letters were an essential way in that era to measure the size of the influence of radio stations on specific societies (Alahamad, 2011, 10). The arrival of more than half of these letters from various countries of the Arab world is clear evidence of Umm Kulthum's voice forming a spirit of the values of a common Arab culture, as the voice of the Egyptian-Arab Umm Kulthum has become an Arab unanimous icon.

Researcher in political sciences, such as Ismail Fayed, attributes Umm Kulthum's tremendous influence to the use of mystical presence and the methods of religious chanting as a technical and performance framework in her songs (Neyya, 2020).

Her songs used to reach all homes in the form of commitment, decency, and a musical chord that attracted all segments of society, regardless of their political affiliation, whether Islamic left or right.

It is worth mentioning that the Voice of Arabs spread the national spirit among Arabs, as it hosted the cultural, political, and religious elites. With these elites, the voice of Arabs played a significant role in defining a section of the agenda of domestic and foreign policies, and among them, the voice of Umm Kulthum had a big impact (Boyd, 1975, 645). In this regard, it should be noted that the influence of Umm Kulthum came within the framework of the first stage of Joseph Nye's decree, which was designed to impose specific political values on the masses. Umm Kulthum was at the first threshold of attracting the masses with culture, art, and media. With the strength of this threshold and the songs of Umm Kulthum that is full of political messages, an integrated and robust system of political values was established based on the symbolism of Nasser as a national leader and Arab nationalism as a means of liberation and retrieval of heroism. Through the system of political values, there was a solid legal, moral, and affiliation acceptance of Nasserite nationalism in Iraq, which was reflected through the 1958 coup against the Baghdad Security Pact allied with The West, as well as Syria's acceptance of the union with Egypt in 1958, and the same legitimacy obtained by Abdel Nasser's Egypt when it played a role in protecting the Yemeni revolution that broke out in 1962 against the Saudi-backed monarchy.

What also confirms the use of Umm Kulthum's voice in reviving the spirit of Arab nationalism and its impact on Arab souls is the anthem "Keep the Weapon awake" as the national anthem of Iraq from 1963 to 1981. The anthem was in the Egyptian dialect, and here it becomes clear how Umm Kulthum's voice was a factor in spreading the spirit of Arab nationalism, with Egypt as the leading symbol of this nationalism.

In addition to the Egyptian films, Umm Kulthum's songs played an essential role in making the Egyptian dialect understandable and acceptable to all Arabs. It has become a popular dialect for them, with which they sing and repeat using, which made it easier for them to understand the political discourses of Nasser (Dawisha, 1976, 165).

This significant influence of Umm Kulthum in building the Arab Nasserist identity was included in a secret report of the American ambassador in Cairo at the time, where he indicated that these concerts passed messages and served the Nasser regime in spreading Arab nationalism in the Arab world from Morocco to Bahrain (Hale, 1975, 30).

The impact of Umm Kulthum's voice in spreading the national spirit reached the extent that many Arabs started to promote cafes and restaurants by adding broadcasts of Umm Kulthum's concerts at specific hours (Yahya, 2015). Rather, these cafes became headquarters for the meeting of Arab Nasserist socialists as well as those affected by Nasserite thought, as they used to meet in these cafes to organize their ranks and express their political, cultural, and partisan lives.

After Nasser bestowed the title "The Fourth Pyramid" on Umm Kulthum, she was given the title "Mother of the Arabs", and "The Constellation of the East," because of the impact that her beautiful and sad voice had on the souls of Arabs, who used to rejoice at the sound of the sad violin and the charming flute flowing through the lyrics of her songs tune that was being carefully selected (Assaf, 2008, 46-47). This

huge influence that Umm Kulthum achieved was not for Nasser to waste in vain. For him, Umm Kulthum was a very strong functional propaganda element in achieving his goal based on establishing a collective identity upon which the Arabs would unite without any disagreement. This is what prompted the Voice of Arabs to increase the broadcast of Umm Kulthum's songs in order to root its national influence.

Another example on Umm Kulthum inculcating the national spirit among Arabs was what happened after the defeat of 1967 when Umm Kulthum gained nearly 2 million and 530 thousand dollars from her concerts that were taking place in Arab countries under the title "Supporting the Arab Army", meaning the Egyptian army. The amount of 2.5\$ million was great importance for Egypt at that time, especially after that painful defeat (Turhan, 2016).

When Umm Kulthum died, her funeral was attended by four million Egyptian and Arab citizens. This would be another example of the entrenchment of the national spirit in the hearts of Arabs through Umm Kulthum (Turhan, 2016, 49). The impact of Umm Kulthum's voice still affects the souls of the Arabs today. Many Arabs are waiting for her songs to be broadcast on Rotana Zaman, Saudi Arabia, and even the official Saudi channel, where the broadcast begins at ten or eleven, as it was during the era of Nasser, and the songs continue to be broadcast for two hours (El-cinema, 2023; Al-Ghad, 2017). Not only do Rotana Zaman and the Saudi channel broadcast Umm Kulthum's songs. However, there were also several Arab radio stations and channels that still broadcast Umm Kulthum's songs at the time, including The Voice of the Arabs, Al-Aghani Radio, Orient Radio, Tarbiat Radio, and others (Sama3y, 2009).

### **Conclusion**

This paper investigated the role of soft power tools such as radio and music in spreading the ideology during the Gamal Abdel Nasser. The study concluded that Gamal instrumentalized Umm Khultum's voice, radio, and music as a soft power tool to strengthen his ideology. The power of propaganda that relied on Umm Kulthum's voice successfully gathered Arab masses from Morocco to Bahrain around the radio at ten pm to listen to Umm Kulthum's songs, which contained several political messages targeting the Arab subconscious. It is noted that the Voice of the Arabs Radio station, which broadcasted the song of Umm Kulthum, was superior to its counterparts at the time in the Arab world. At that time, there were local radio stations in Sudan, Syria, Bahrain, Somalia, Yemen, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Still, the Voice of Arabs was the most listened to, as Umm Kulthum was the voice of Arab unity, and Arabs were nostalgic for unity after their division into separate countries due to borders erected after the First and Second World Wars. Umm Kulthum's voice became an important cultural element in the literature of Nasserite socialist thought, which spread significantly throughout the Arab world. As a result, there has been a welcome in Syria, Yemen, and Iraq to Gamal Abdel Nasser as a nationalist leader whose greatness mounted with Umm Kulthum's song. Therefore, this paper contends that Gamel Abdel Nasser exploited Umm Kulthum and her voice and Arab's Voice Radio as a soft power tool to export and empower Arab nationalism among Arabs. It is obvious and almost inevitable that during Gamel's reign, radio and music played a critical role in shaping Egyptian foreign policy. We found that Gamal Abdel Nasser exploited the radio and music to convey and spread the ideology of Arab nationalism. In this regard, led

by Gamal, Arab nationalism was distributed by radio (Cairo), a program (the Voice of Arabs), and a singer (Umm Khultum).

The profound influence of Arab Radio further augmented the impact of Umm Kulthum's vocal prowess. Arab Radio significantly shaped the opinions and actions of the Arab population across several countries, including Morocco and Bahrain, in alignment with the foreign policy objectives pursued by Gamal Abdel Nasser. In the 1960s, a daily influx of around 3,000 letters originating from various countries in the Arab world was received by this radio station. The incorporation of cultural, political, and religious elites by Arab Radio had a significant role in the formation of a political value system centred around the symbolic figure of Gamal Abdel Nasser as a nationalist leader. The political landscape in Iraq witnessed a notable embrace of Nasserite nationalism, characterized by robust legal, moral, and affiliative support. However, this sentiment reversed following the 1958 coup against the Baghdad Security Pact, which had aligned Iraq with Western powers. Similarly, Syria also opted to unite with Egypt in 1958, driven by a sense of national identity fostered through radio broadcasts. This union bestowed upon Syria the same level of legitimacy enjoyed by Egypt under the leadership of Abdel Nasser, particularly due to Egypt's involvement in safeguarding the Yemeni revolution against the monarchy supported by Saudi Arabia, which erupted in 1962.

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