

The Arab League and Comprehensive Economic Security (2019-2023): An Analytical Study of Economic Indicators

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Abstract

Objectives: This study aims to assess the role of the Arab League in achieving comprehensive economic security between 2019 and 2023, nearly eight decades after its establishment. It focuses on analyzing key economic indicators to evaluate the organization's effectiveness in addressing economic challenges.

Methods: The study employs a statistical analysis approach and the school of indicators to examine economic issues directly linked to the Arab League's inability to achieve comprehensive economic security. Additionally, the theoretical frameworks of interdependence and regional integration are utilized to measure economic indicator sectors among member countries.

Results: The findings reveal weak cooperation and interdependence among most Arab countries. Economic indicators related to food security, economic growth, and high rates of inflation, unemployment, and poverty demonstrate significant challenges in achieving comprehensive economic security. The study emphasizes that implementing a regional economic system requires a new political strategy grounded in regional integration and interdependence.

Conclusions: The study concludes that a negative correlation exists between current economic indicators and the attainment of comprehensive economic security within the Arab League. Achieving this goal necessitates strengthened Arab cooperation, fostering a collective will, and leveraging the capacities of economically advanced countries to support integrated development plans that address the needs of less developed nations.

Keywords: Arab League, Regional Integration, Interdependence Theory, Comprehensive Economic Security, Economic Indicators.

الجامعة العربية والأمن الاقتصادي الشامل (2019-2023): المؤشرات الاقتصادية (دراسة تحليلية)

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ملخص

أهداف البحث: تهدف الدراسة إلى تشخيص واقع الجامعة العربية في تحقيق الأمن الاقتصادي الشامل في ضوء تحليل المؤشرات الاقتصادية (2019 - 2023) بعد قرابة ثمانية عقود من إنشاء الجامعة العربية.

المنهجية: اعتمد البحث على منهج التحليل الإحصائي، ودراسة المؤشرات لتوضيح القضايا الاقتصادية التي لها ارتباط مباشر في الكشف عن عجز الجامعة العربية كمنظمة وأعضاء عن تحقيق الأمن الاقتصادي الشامل. كما تستخدم الدراسة منطلقات نظرية "الاعتماد المتبادل والتكامل الإقليمي"، وذلك عند قياس عدد من المؤشرات الاقتصادية بين دول الجامعة العربية.

نتائج البحث: أظهرت الدراسة وجود ضعف في التعاون والاعتماد المتبادل بين معظم الدول العربية، نتيجة دراسة مؤشرات اقتصادية ذات علاقة بالأمن الغذائي، النمو الاقتصادي، وارتفاع في معدلات التضخم، البطالة والفقر، مما أثر على تحقيق الأمن الاقتصادي الشامل. كما إن تطبيق النظام الاقتصادي الإقليمي العربي يتطلب استراتيجية سياسية جديدة، تركز على التكامل الإقليمي، ونظرية الاعتماد المتبادل.

خلاصة البحث: توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة ارتباطية سلبية بين مخرجات المؤشرات الاقتصادية، وبين تحقيق الأمن الاقتصادي الشامل المنشود من الجامعة. ما يتطلب التعاون العربي في خلق إرادة جادة مبنية على استجابة من الدول ذات القدرات الرأسمالية والانتاجية، في دعم خطط تنمية اقتصادية متكاملة تلبي بالتالي احتياجات الدول الأقل نمواً.

الكلمات الدالة: جامعة الدول العربية، التكامل الإقليمي، نظرية الاعتماد المتبادل، الأمن الاقتصادي الشامل، المؤشرات الاقتصادية.



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1. Introduction:

The Arab League, like any international organization, was established to create links to achieve common interests through cooperation between member states. The League is not just a regional and international organization; it is an organization with a national character that stems from factors described as common denominators and overlapping challenges. Therefore, it was natural for its charter to ensure many objectives that emphasize the path of multiple cooperation sectors.

Article Two of the Arab League Charter stated that the purpose of the League is to strengthen relations between member states, coordinate their various plans to achieve cooperation between them and maintain independence and sovereignty, and generally consider the affairs and interests of Arab states.

The purpose of the League's objectives is for the participating states to cooperate closely in accordance with the systems and circumstances of each state, and in a manner that achieves the goals of regional integration in economic and financial affairs, such as trade, customs, currency, agriculture, food, industry, etc., so that this is reflected in the requirements of the desired comprehensive security.

Regional integration between political units is considered one of the theoretical and practical approaches that contribute to improving economic and development policies.

The Interdependence theory also one of the important approaches in international relations that was introduced by the Neo-liberal theory at the end of the eighties of the last century with the aim of explaining some of the phenomena that began to characterize the extent of the ability of the active states in the regional system, and in a way that leads to real dealing with the conditions of comprehensive security, such as political stability and social justice, especially when finding policies that are consistent with the optimal investment of available resources, productivity, and the efficiency of the distribution economy between the targeted regional areas.

In brief, it can be said that regional economic integration means that one country provides the other with the economic elements it needs and lacks to enhance the economic production process between them. The relationship in this context may be equal, as is the case in alliances and economic blocs that arise between developed countries, such as the case of the "European Union", or unequal, as appears in the case of the need for integration between the countries of the "Arab League", where there is a large disparity between countries with financial capabilities and countries with economic challenges due to the scarcity of resources.

Hence, this study seeks to diagnose the extent of the Arab League's ability to achieve the requirements of economic integration and the extent of its reflection on comprehensive economic security, by analyzing related economic indicators, such as food security challenges such as water, economic growth, unemployment, inflation, etc. Thus, providing a general assessment that seeks to produce results that clarify the reality of Arab economic integration, and highlight the problems of economic disparity between the countries of the Arab League.

2. General Framework of the Study:

2.1 The Study Problem and Questions:

Since its establishment, the Arab League has been seeking to achieve its goals towards the member states to provide the requirements for cooperation to accomplish the various aspects and elements of comprehensive national security on the one hand, and to confront the multiple challenges that arise as problems and affect the components of the member states on the other hand. However, it is not possible to judge the extent to which the success or failure of any organization can only be determined by evaluating its roles in light of the legal rules and the roles of the primary and subsidiary bodies of the Arab League in its quest to reach the ability to reflect its activities on the countries with all their components, especially the societies of the Arab countries.

In short, the history of Arab economic integration is a complex and multifaceted subject. Although several regional organizations have been established to promote economic cooperation and integration among Arab countries, the level of integration has remained low (Panke, D. 2020.497). Challenges such as lack of coordination and cooperation among member states, dependence on oil exports, and lack of political will have hampered efforts to achieve greater economic

integration in the Arab world.

To clarify this, the study seeks to answer the following questions:-

- To what extent can the Arab League achieve regional integration and the requirements of comprehensive Arab economic security?

- What are the levels of Arab economic cooperation through analysis of economic indicators such as poverty, unemployment, inflation, and population growth (2019-2023)?

2.2 Objectives of the Study:

The study seeks to clarify the following objectives:

- Clarifying the role of the Arab League in achieving the components of comprehensive Arab security through the economic sector.

- Discussing economic outcomes, through studying economic indicators such as: inflation, unemployment, poverty, unbalanced population growth, food security, and others.

2.3 Hypothesis of the Study:

"There is a negative relationship between the economic reality of the Arab League and the achievement of Comprehensive Economic Security and Regional Integration".

2.4 Significance of the Study:

The significance of the study stems from both theoretical and practical significance:

I. Theoretical Significance:

Identifying the extent of cooperation between the Arab League countries in achieving the requirements of comprehensive economic security, as well as achieving regional economic integration in light of economic indicators.

II. Practical Significance:

The study seeks to evaluate the efforts of the League of Arab States towards Arab economic integration during the period (2019-2023), in order to serve comprehensive economic security, and how to benefit from employing the theory of interdependence that aims to create regulatory and practical policies capable of achieving optimal investment of the resources available to the member states of the League of Arab States.

2.5 Variables of the Study:

Independent Variable: Arab League

Mediating Variable: Economic Indicators

Dependent Variable: Comprehensive Economic Security

2.6 Limitations of the Study:

1.The Objective limits: Arab League, Comprehensive Economic Security, Economic Indicators.

2. Term of the Study: To analyze the levels of Arab economic integration, the researcher believes that the study period (2019-2023) is appropriate, modern, and sufficient to measure economic indicators.

3.Theoretical Framework of the Study:

3.1 Theoretical Literature:

In a context of globalization and further economic integration in recent decades, the relationship between the economy and national security has become increasingly inter-linked. These inter-linkages represent both opportunities and potential threats to national and regional security, because the open and interconnected nature of countries' economies creates vulnerabilities to potential internal and external threats (Retter, L.2020.3-9). And moreover, the in recognition of this, economic security has emerged as an important strategic priority-for the governments, with the connection between economic security and broader national security subject to particular emphasis in both the National and Regional Security Strategies. In addition, it is worth noting that threats to vital economic processes has been cited in the Integrated International Security Strategy in most world states and regional organization as one of the most urgent national security threats (Steinberg, F.2024.184-185).

There are many theories that have been addressed by specialists in the field of international relations. These theories

have linked the achievement of “comprehensive security and Regional Integration”, through various means and goals, some of which focus on economic, developmental, political, and security defense agreements. The most prominent of these are the “Functional theory” of (D. Mitirani) and “New- Functional theory” of (Hasse, Schuman, Monne) which focuses on making countries more economically cooperative and open with regional countries, to respond to the needs of international integration by creating political and economic programs, that meet the needs of societies. Also “Communication theory” of (Karl Deutch) focused on increasing areas of cooperation between countries to achieve cooperation and convergence between regional state systems, to merge either within a unified federal entity, or by establishing cooperative institutions while maintaining the sovereignty of each country (West, R.2017.470-471).

The “Interdependence theory”, its one of the important approaches in International Relations and within the “Liberal theory” to explain the growth of non-state actors and their competition with states, such as multinational corporations, which play effective economic roles (Rusbult, C.2003.357).

The “liberal theory” confirms that “Interdependence” enhances the opportunities for regional cooperation and increases the development of global governance mechanisms, which has different effects on global security (Moravcsik, A.1997.523-525). The liberal approach to “Interdependence” emerged as a critical response to the “New- Realism” theory of “Kenneth Waltz”, which focused on (States, Economic Openness, Interdependence) to achieve Comprehensive Security (Donnelly, J. 2018.131).

Through this, economic aspects are considered an important entry point to achieve regional integration and thus comprehensive economic security. Thus, economic goals serve the countries and societies of the member states of the founding organization, such as expanding the size of markets in production and manufacturing, increasing the rate of economic growth, optimal investment of natural and human resources, job opportunities and employment, which is reflected in economic indicators such as: inflation, food security, unemployment, etc.

3.2 Concepts of the Study:

3.2.1 Arab League:

A regional organization established in 1945 by seven Arab countries at the time. It now includes countries from Asia and Africa that have achieved the conditions of Arabism. Its charter stipulates strengthening ties between member states and coordinating their political plans in order to achieve cooperation between them and preserve their independence and sovereignty, as well as close cooperation in economic, transportation, cultural, nationality, social, and health affairs. The charter also affirmed the inadmissibility of resorting to force in disputes between member states, respecting the existing governance systems in the League countries as a right of those countries, and working to protect the sovereignty of member states (Dakhlallah, F.2012. 393-412).

Procedural Definition of Arab League:

A regional political organization that aims to secure the interests of Arab countries. For many reasons and circumstances, the League has shown little ability to intervene positively to ease tensions between Arab countries, address the integration process between its members, or build peace and stop the wars witnessed by many countries. At the economic level, the League has also remained unable to achieve the goal of regional integration despite the availability of elements of integration, geography, culture, values, history and common language between the governments and countries of the Arab League on the one hand and the possibility of investing in multiple economic resources on the other hand.

Therefore, the term Arab League will be used when revealing the extent of cooperation in economic fields and thus understanding the economic outputs of member states in light of the analysis of economic indicators over multiple periods as well as focusing on the limits of the annual study (2019-2023).

3.2.2 Comprehensive Security:

Many theorists of regional systems and international politics believe that future threats will be of a “non-military nature” and can only be solved, in part, by military means. In this regard, Buzan, Wever, and Wilde have presented a new reformulation of the concept of “comprehensive security”, they explain that institutions, actors, and even the individual, everything is security”(Buzan, B. 2003. 71). So the idea that comprehensive security means protection against various

threats (military, political, economic, social, and environmental) for both the population and the individual. Thus, according to the sector and level, there are actors, threats, and measures that can be applied. From this point of view, "comprehensive security" is characterized by five sectors: (Dewitt, D. 1994.5)

1) Military sector: It concerns military doctrine, armed forces, state capabilities, etc. This sector is called in military vocabulary "hard power". 2) Political sector: This sector focuses on the stability of the state, the system of government, legitimacy and sovereignty. 3) Economic sector: It concerns resources, investment, finance, market, social welfare, etc. 4) Social sector: It entails the identity of the community or collective identity, which may exist independently of the state. 5) Environmental sector: It was used by the United Nations and is concerned with the "human environment" in order to preserve natural resources such as energy, water, forests and agriculture.

Procedural Definition of Comprehensive Security:

The concept of 'Comprehensive Security' will be used Procedural: when studying the reflection of the economic factor on economic indicators as an important factor of comprehensive security, which reflects the ability of the Arab League countries to respond to the rest of the requirements and components of the comprehensive security system, which is considered one of the dimensions of the articles of the League of Arab States.

3.2.3 Regional Integration:

Is a process in which neighboring countries enter into an agreement to promote cooperation through common institutions and rules. The objectives of the agreement may range from economic to political to environmental, although it has typically taken the form of a political economic initiative in which commercial interests are central to achieving broader social, political and security goals, as defined by national governments. Regional integration has been organized either through supranational institutional structures or through intergovernmental decision-making, or a combination of the two.

Haas, Ernst B. in his Book "The Study of Regional Integration: Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Prioritizing" said the "Regional integration has been defined as the process through which independent national states "voluntarily mingle, merge and mix with their neighbors so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts among themselves (Haas, B. 1971.32). Some scholars also view regional integration as simply the process by which states within a given region increase their level of interaction on economic, security, political, or social and cultural issues (Van, H. 2003.7).

Procedural Definition of Regional Integration:

The concept of Regional Integration will be used Procedural: Economically on the members of the Arab League and in light of the economic indicators related to rates of (economic growth, food security, inflation, poverty, unemployment, etc.).

3.2.4 Regional Economics:

The concept of Regional Economics refer to the economic advantage of a geographical location and human activities of greatest height to contribute maximally to the general growth and prosperity of the region (Regional economics. Wikipedia.2023). It is a sub-discipline of economics and is often regarded as one of the fields of the social sciences. It addresses the economic aspect of the regional problems that are spatially analyzable so that theoretical or policy implications can be derived with respect to regions whose geographical scope ranges from local to global areas (Dicken, P. 2007.33). The regional economics study of differentiation and interrelationships of areas in a universe of unevenly distributed and imperfectly mobile resources with particular emphasis in application on the planning of the social overhead capital investments to mitigate the social problems by these circumstances (Hoover, M. Giarratani, F. 1999.12). Finally, it must be stated that the Regional Economy may be strong if it has a robust amount of economic activity and job growth. This is measured by low unemployment, steady inflation, poverty, and increasing GDP (Ngubane, M.2023.11)

3.2.5 Economic Integration:

Economic integration is an arrangement between countries that usually involves lowering or eliminating trade barriers and coordinating monetary and fiscal policies. Economic integration aims to lower costs for both consumers and producers and increase trade among the countries participating in the agreement (Kenton, Will.2024.1). Economic integration is sometimes referred to as regional integration, because it often occurs between neighboring countries. The benefits of

economic integration fall into three categories: trade creation, job creation, and consensus and cooperation (Ibid.1-2). In other words, when regional economies agree to integrate, trade barriers are lowered and economic and political coordination increases.

Procedural Definition of Regional Economy and Economic Integration::

Procedural, regional economics and economic integration are used when the study addresses the reality of the economy of Arab countries through the League of Arab States. The extent to which its members are compatible with the university's specific goals related to the economy and regional integration, and with the following considerations:-

- 1-The economy of the Arab League is the economy of the member states of the Arab League.
- 2- The economy has traditionally depended on oil and natural gas exports.
- 3- Members of the Arab League are among the richest and poorest of the world, and there is a great disparity in the economic development of members of the league.
- 4- There is a significant difference imbalance in wealth between the Gulf states, which include Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and war-torn nations within the league, such as: Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. Also, Arab countries with limited economic resources such as: Jordan, Palestine, Mauritania, Lebanon, Tunisia, etc.

3.3 Methodology of the Study:

The rates of economic indicators will be studied as outputs to know the extent of the Arab League's ability to provide the requirements of comprehensive economic security, based on the concept of regional integration and interdependence theory. Also, the study will use the statistical analysis method and the indicators school approach to clarify the economic aspects that are directly related to achieving comprehensive security, which is one of the tasks of the Arab League.

3.4 Previous Studies:

1- In their book "*Arab Economic Integration: Hope and Reality*", published by Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 2003. Galal and Hoekman, identified several issues related to the desired Arab economic integration as an alternative path to prosperity. They focused on the Arab countries that benefit from the European Union's experience in regional and economic integration, as a regional institution similar in its strategy to the Arab League. In many respects, understanding the Eu's experience is of great importance in understanding past Arab regional integration efforts and in informing future attempts. For these reasons, it is useful to look to the Eu's experience for insights, taking into account the historical context of the two regions, the initial state of their economies, and the structure of economic incentives. Another major reason to look to the Eu's experience is that it is the most prominent example of successful integration. Finally, the authors conclude that while there are similarities between the two regions, the differences between them appear to be much greater. Why, they ask, does such a strategy not have a better chance of success in the Arab region? The answer lies in the political constraints on trade policy reforms, especially when trade barriers are high and costly, as they are in Arab economies (Galal, A. Hoekman, B. 2003.18-19).

2- In their study "*The Role of the League of Arab States in Resolving Political and Economic Issues*," published by the Arab Democratic Center in 2018, researchers (Mohammad Al-Daihi and Hani Al-Rasul) explained many issues related to the emergence of the League of Arab States, the development of its organs, the League of Arab States, the mechanisms of decision-making, and the means of the League. Arab countries in resolving disputes. The study also discussed the role of the League in confronting crises and challenges. The study concluded with several results, including the main problem of Arab evasion in confronting the truth behind the weakness of joint Arab action, which is the absence of a common Arab will. The League of Arab States is, in the end, a mirror in which the nature of Arab relations and the Arab will are reflected. The study also recommended the necessity of adopting a comprehensive reform plan for the League of Arab States to suit the current Arab political changes (Al-Daihi, M, Al-Rasul, H.2018, P.13).

3- In his study "*The Role of the League of Arab States in Resolving Arab Issues 2011-2017*," the researcher (Imad Abdel Karim) explained the challenges that faced the League of Arab States in managing Arab crises and the mechanism of action of the League of Arab States in resolving Arab issues. He also demonstrated the nature of Arab, regional and international influences on the positions of the League of Arab States towards Arab issues. The researcher also explained

that anticipating the future of the League of Arab States in light of the new changes in the Arab world is based on a radical treatment of all the elements of the League of Arab States. The researcher believes that the greatest and most immediate possibility for the League of Arab States is the continuation of the status quo, and whether it develops for better or worse and between development or deterioration depends a lot on the state of the Arab revolutions. (Imad. 2018. 129).

4- Farah Dakhllallah made clear in her research published in 2012 entitled "*The League of Arab States and Regional Security: Towards an Arab Security Community?*" that the historical role of the League of Arab States in regional security through the prism of order and autonomy in the Arab states system. It argues that the League is a product of the dilemma between state autonomy and Arab nationalism that set the Arab regional order for decades. Strained by role conflict, Arab rulers opted for a weak inter-regional organization that they subsequently undermined, exploited or promoted for statistical purposes. However, over time, the consolidation of state autonomy and the decline of pan-Arabist have led to the emergence of a more stable regional order. (Dakhllallah, F.2012.393-412).

5- In his study of "*The League of Arab States & the Need for Transformative Change*", 2017. Hassan Elkatawneh stated that the Arab League suffers from a set of difficulties and challenges that make it difficult to reach the organization's vision. The study also provided information about the organization's structure, with a detailed explanation of the organizational analysis, an explanation of the transformation change strategy, and the measures that the Arab League must take as a regional institution with an organizational strategy and objectives. The author concluded that the Arab League faced many challenges that can be classified into three basic groups: legal, organizational, and political. Therefore, the Arab League could not make any trans-formative changes that would activate its role in achieving its goals in line with the needs of Arab peoples and societies (Elkatawneh, H.2017.17).

3.5 Distinguish the study from others:

The researcher believes that there are many scientific studies published in refereed books and periodicals that have discussed many aspects of the roles of the Arab League, and other studies related to the cooperation of the members of the Arab League to achieve comprehensive regional economic security. Despite the importance of these studies, this study is distinguished by being recent (2019-2023) and measuring economic indicators related to the economic aspect, as this is an important element that expresses interdependence and regional integration.

4. Comprehensive Security: Theoretical Concepts and Pillars

The next part of the study deals with both the theoretical concepts of the levels of comprehensive security, and the difference between security in its general sense and the concept of individual security, in preparation for the study topic related to the economic security aspect, and the study of the indicators that express the reality of regional integration and Arab economic security as an important aspect of the comprehensive Arab security system.

4.1 Theoretical Concepts of Comprehensive security levels:

4.1.1 Security and Individual Security:

Security can be defined in general as the ability to be free from a major threat to the highest individual and collective values through all possible means to preserve at least the right to survival, or it is the absence of a threat to basic values. Henry Kissinger also defined security as: "any behavior by which a society seeks to achieve its right to survival" (Ahmed, R.1984. 80).

As for the concept of security of individuals, there are many international legislation's that pertain to individuals, such as what is stated in the Charter of the United Nations in affirming the basic human rights, which were strengthened by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and what is stipulated in national legislation and constitutions, in addition to conventions preventing the crime of genocide (Arafat, K.2006. 3).

4.1.2 National Security:

National security is defined as providing protection for citizens and individuals present on the territory of the state, and it is also known as the use of security means to maintain the proper functioning of daily life and away from the occurrence of any crises that lead to causing harm to the human and material components of society.

National security is that which relates to the state's ability to protect its lands, people, interests, beliefs, culture, and

economy from any external aggression, in addition to its ability to confront all internal problems and work to solve them and to follow a balanced policy that prevents polarization, increases the unity of the word, and roots loyalty and belonging to the homeland and leadership (Calamari.2020.43).

4.1.3 Regional Security:

Regional security refers to the protection and defense measures implemented within a specific geographic area to address national and regional security issues, including defense budgets, military readiness, intelligence gathering, law enforcement, economic and cultural cooperation, diplomacy, etc (John, S.2003.192).

As for Robert Keohane and Nye Joseph, they believe that regional security emerged with the repercussions of the Cold War between the Western and Eastern camps and with the establishment of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and there became controversy in dealing with the concept among theorists in regional and international policies in terms of determining the reference unit of analysis to achieve comprehensive regional security. What is required is in light of the limits of the term individual, humanity, the state, and the nation, as well as identifying the sources of the threat, whether they are military, social, cultural, economic, or other, as well as understanding the means and strategies that are taken in order to achieve regional and international security(Keohane.1997.24).

4.1.4 Collective Security:

Charles and Clifford Buchanan emphasize the importance of collective security as a way to enhance international security by establishing institutions for collective security that provide a more effective mechanism for the balancing act against an aggressor party by creating a striking force that provides deterrence or taking more stringent measures in the event that deterrence fails. Charles and Clifford Buchanan lay down three principles for the establishment of a collective security system: (Ramayana. 2017.33)

- 1- Not resorting to military force in settling international disputes.
- 2- Expanding the scope of the concept of national interest to include the interests of the international community and intervening automatically and collectively in the event that a party threatens the existing collective security system.
- 3- Ines Claude believes that countries must overcome fear and become accustomed to mutual trust.

4.2 Pillars of Comprehensive Security Levels

Achieving national security requires several key requirements from political units to ensure its existence and continuity. This is represented by several important pillars (Espinosa, J. 2021.3-9):

First: Adherence to a strategy that includes permanent maintenance of sustainable development of political, social, economic and security interests.

Second: Protecting political unity from external threats.

Third: Paying attention to internal harmony and cohesion and protecting political unity from any internal threats such as strife and internal divisions.

Fourth: Achieving social, economic and cultural justice and equal opportunities, which contributes to belonging to the state and all its components.

Fifth: Adhering to the cultural heritage of society by preserving the culture of religious and social values that represent the exclusiveness of the political unit must remain in the face of any negative influence from external forces as a result of the repercussions of the required interaction with international and foreign units.

Sixth: Building a defensive and offensive military system capable of deterring any external threats.

Seventh: Paying attention to education, technology, and continuous and optimal investment in various human and natural resources

Eighth: Striving to achieve a food security system

Ninth: The credibility of the political system and continuous review to evaluate government and legislative performance.

5. Arab League and comprehensive Economic Security: Economic Sector and Indicators

As the study showed before, the link between economic integration and comprehensive security has long attracted attention. Integration through extensive trade and investment relations has increased interdependence and made conflict more costly,

helping countries maintain peace and stability. Economic security focuses on helping governments' ability to consistently meet people's needs. The concept is also important for countries and individuals, as it is a factor in assessing national security on the one hand, and is linked to the concept of economic well-being. Therefore, the following study will seek to explain the Arab League in achieving comprehensive economic security when studying the economic aspects and indicators.

5.1 Economic Aspects and Indicators:

The Arab League was concerned with finding effective economic mechanisms and establishing Arab institutions that would push the wheel of economic integration, steps forward that supported the nationalist unitary trend prevailing in the era of the 1950s, which called for and supported an appropriate framework (Gouvea, R. Vora, G.2017.604). To meet the ambition and dream of the Arabs to establish Arab economic unity, the Political Committee of the League of Arab States, in its meeting held in Damascus on (5/22/1956), took a decision to form a committee of Arab experts to prepare a complete project for economic unity and the steps that must be followed to achieve it. The goal is to organize economic relations between the Arab League countries and consolidate them on foundations that suit the existing natural and historical ties and achieve the best conditions. To prosper its economy, develop its wealth, and provide for its country's well-being, it was approved by the Economic Council in accordance with Resolution No. (85), dated (6/2/1957 (Ibid.2017.605). On September 9, 1953, the Council approved the establishment of the "Arab Telecommunications Union," which began its work from its headquarters in Cairo in 1957 and continued to exercise its powers until its abolition in 1978, within the framework of avoiding duplication in the competencies of the organizations operating within the university system, and then a decision was issued. Establishment of the Arab Common Market in 1964 (Panke, D.2020.487-488).

After the Second Gulf War, the summit held in Cairo in 1996 took a decision to assign the Economic and Social Council to accelerate the establishment of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, and the Council actually developed an executive program (Abdul Kareem, I.2018.39-40). To establish the region over a period of ten years, starting on (1/1/1998) and on (1/1/2005), the region entered its final stage, and all customs duties imposed on goods of Arab origin and exchanged between the member states of the League became the zero level (Ibid.39-40). The "Amman" summit in 2001 was also called the "Economic Summit," and this summit adopted the Egyptian initiative to hold the first Arab economic conference in "Cairo" in November 2001 under the slogan "Improving the performance of Arab economies", and joint Arab economic action became a tangible reality. It is expressed by a wide network of joint Arab institutions, funds and projects with overlapping missions and specializations in various fields (Hammad, Magdy. 2004.4).

5.1.1 Food Security Aspect:

As defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), The concept of food security means "providing food to all members of society in the quantity and quality necessary to meet their needs on an ongoing basis for a healthy and active life." This definition differs from the traditional concept of food security, which is linked to achieving self-sufficiency through the state's reliance on its resources and capabilities to produce its food needs locally. This difference makes the concept of food security, according to the FAO's definition, more in line with the current economic transformations and the accompanying liberalization of international trade in food commodities. Food security is a multi-disciplinary sector and is linked to several sectors, such as agriculture, Water, industry, supply, trade, health, social development, work, and others. Water, energy, and food are closely interconnected and influenced Negatively and positively by each other (Cafer, A. Dawdy, J. 2010.7).

Food Security Problems in the Arab World:

1- Water Problem:

In light of the increasing need to expand irrigated agriculture to achieve food security, accelerated population growth, and stimulate agricultural exports, it is expected that the demand for Water for all uses will rise to about 436 billion m3, and the volume of water demand for agricultural purposes will reach about 378 billion m3 in 2030 (United Nations Report. 2019.5).

Tables No. (1-1.1-2.1-3) clearing the water reality sector in Arab world based on the website ALAMSAR for Political, Security and Economic Studies in 2023.

Table No. (1-1) Most (Ten) Countries Have a Per capita Share of Water in the Arab World, 2023.

Lebanon	Syria	Tunisia	Algeria	Sudan	Libya	Morocco	Egypt	Iraq	Yemen
1015	940	760	680	590	570	550	540	530	520

Source: AlAMSAR for Political, Security and Economic Studies, 2023.

Table No (1-2) Lowest Arab Countries in Estimates of Per capita Water, 2023

Bahrain	Jordan	Kuwait	Palestine	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	United Arab Emirates	Oman
240	61	84	65	26	89	17	80

Source: AlAMSAR for Political, Security and Economic Studies, 2023.

Table No. (1-3) (Global Ranking of a Number of Arab Countries According to the Per capita Share of Fresh Water in 2017

Country	Tunisia	Algeria	Mauritania	Libya	Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	Jordan	Oman	Yemen
Global Ranking	91	96	108	118	127	128	130	135	136

Source: AlAMSAR for Political, Security and Economic Studies, 2023.

Through the figures in the above tables, we conclude several issues related to the reality of the Arab water deficit, which is directly reflected in agriculture and what is related to this sector in terms of the need to provide food security and employ the workforce:-

- Efficiency of the workforce in agriculture and its role in achieving growth: Data indicate that the ratio of the agricultural workforce to the total agricultural population in the Arab countries is the lowest compared to developing and industrialized countries, especially if we take into account the low use of technology and mechanization in the Arab countries, which increases the need To the labour force in agriculture compared to developed countries (AlAMSAR.2023.1-2).

- The increase in food, fertilizer and fuel prices and the resulting pressure on the financial capabilities of Arab governments to support basic food supplies and the ability of consumers to obtain food.

Despite the importance of the roles of the Arab League in achieving a higher level of Arab cooperation to provide Water and food to the population in the Arab world, the failure of Arab efforts to find solutions to the food problem in the recent period has increased the necessity of paying attention to the issue of food security in the Arab countries, through assessing the situation. To prepare strategies and programs that guarantee the stability of food security, the agricultural and food situation in the Arab world has entered a critical stage, represented by the growing demand for agricultural products in general and food in particular, in addition to the rise in food prices in global markets and the decline in the relative importance of the agricultural sector in the Arab economic structures (Garbero , A. Jackering , L.2021.6).

-2Technological and Material Support:

Arab League seeks to implement the national and joint development components in accordance with the following methodology (El-Sherbini, A. Sinha, R. 1978.43):

- Distributing roles among joint Arab action organizations and institutions, under the guidance of the Economic and Social Council, in preparation for preparing the necessary executive plans to put development programs and components into practice.

- Preparing executive plans and programmes, whereby each joint Arab action institution shall develop a medium-term executive plan to fulfill the roles assigned to it, and it shall be approved by its legislative bodies.

In short, and through the Water and food reality in the Arab world, we find the following: -

- The Arab world's water consumption has increased five times over the past fifty years, and current consumption is

limited to agriculture, industry and drinking. Annual consumption is estimated at about 230 billion cubic meters, of which 43 billion cubic meters are consumed in drinking and industry and 187 billion cubic meters in agriculture (Varzakas,T. Slim, S. 2024. 306-307).

- The steady population increase is offset by a decrease in the per ca pita share of Water due to its limited resources, as an estimated census of the population in the Arab world in 2030 indicates an increase estimated at three times what it was in 1990.

- The weak financial capacity of some Arab countries to search for alternative solutions in the face of water shortages in exchange for the continuous population increase and the impact of this on the country's economy, development and security.

According to the statistics shown in Table No. (4-1), which estimated the spending of Arab countries on desalinating drinking water in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa in the year 2023, we notice the presence of Arab countries with low-income, non-oil resources, and yet the cost of spending on desalinating Water has reached (4.2). One billion dollars compared to (14.45) and (10.48) billion for Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, respectively.

Table No. (1-4 (Estimated the Spending of Arab Countries on Desalinating Drinking Water 2023

Saudi Arabia	The UAE	Jordan	Egypt	Oman	Morocco	Tunisia	Algeria	Kuwait	Other countries
14.58	10.28	4.2	3.26	3.16	2.37	0.95	0.21	0.13	0.19

Source: The NEW ARAB Site, 2024

Reviewing to the figures in Tables (1-4) that estimated spending of Arab countries on desalinating drinking water in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, 2023, We conclude the following:-

- There is a possibility of regional conflicts arising between Arab countries through which the same rivers pass, as the Nile River passes through Egypt and Sudan, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon shares the Jordan River, and Syria shares the Euphrates River with Iraq.

-The existence of the sources or passage of the most important sources of Arab Water, represented by large rivers in non-Arab countries, as is the case in the Nile River with its Ethiopian and Ugandan sources, in the Tigris River with its Turkish and Iranian sources, in the Euphrates with its Turkish sources, and finally, as is the case in the Jordan River with its sources under the control of Israel. This restricts economic development plans by the actions of the countries from which Water originates. This could also lead to Water being a means of pressure against Arab countries in light of political differences between those countries or when interests conflict between them.

5.1.2 Inflation:

Inflation is one of the negative economic phenomena experienced by most Arab League countries. While inflation imposes itself for economic reasons on a country or region for a certain period, its continuation for long periods is considered one of the biggest economic problems. Inflation in the Arab League countries is considered complex because it coexists with other chronic economic problems.

The reality of inflation in Arab world can be clarified by displaying tables that show the inflation rates between the years (2019 – 2023) and the International Monetary Fund's Expectations for the year (2024).

Table No. (1-5) Inflation Rates for the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (2019-2023)

The country's	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Saudi Arabia	-2.1	3.4	3.1	2.5	2.1	2.1
Emirates	-1.9	-2.1	2	4.8	3.1	2.6
Qatar	-0.7	-2.6	2.3	5	3.3	3.3
Kuwait	1.1	2.1	3.4	4	3.2	2.7
Oman	0.1	-0.9	1.5	2.8	1.4	2.3
Bahrain	1.1	-2.3	-0.6	3.6	2	2.5

Source: Economic Database and Arab Monetary Fund, 2023

Table No.(1-6):Inflation Rates of other Arab Oil-Exporting Countries During (2019-2023)

Country's	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Algeria	2	2.4	7.2	9.7	6.9	5.7
Iraq	-0.2	0.6	6.1	5.2	5.3	2.8
Yemen	12	27.4	63.8	38.9	18.2	14.5
Libya	0.2	8.2	2.7	4.6	3.7	2.9

Source: Economic Database and Arab Monetary Fund, 2023

Table No. (1-7) Average Inflation Rates for the Oil-Importing Arab Countries (2019-2023)

Years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Rates	16.1	41.7	74.4	41.7	34.1	23.9

Source: Economic Database and Arab Monetary Fund, 2023

From the above tables about inflation rates in the Arab world during the years (2019-2023) and expected by the International Monetary Fund for the year (2024), the following is concluded:

- There is a clear gap in inflation rates between Arab countries, especially between the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and all oil-exporting countries.
- Most Arab countries the inflation rates has moved in period (2019-2023) from (2.4%) to (2.7%).
- Inflation rates varied between (0.5%) in Bahrain and (28.6%) in Sudan, Yemen (14.9%), Libya (9.9%), Egypt (8.6%), Algeria (8.4%).
- On subject of comprehensive Arab economic security, the issue of cooperation between the Arab League countries is very weak to confront this problem of economic inflation.
- The issue of economic partnership between Arab countries does not agree positively with the goals and policies of the Arab League (Raul, G.2017.633).
- Inflation rates are affected by several economic factors, most notably: the supervisory role, reliance on foreign imports, the absence of linking wages to prices, and an imbalance in the trade balance.
- The Arab oil countries do not provide areas of work with multiple production that provide financial income for workers, and are positively reflected in reducing high inflation rates in Arab countries.
- The increase in oil sector prices had a limited impact on Arab society, especially on non-oil producing countries.
- The increase in Arab exports was due to the rise in global oil prices for more than a decade, and oil exports increased by (25%-20%) of the imports of oil countries (United Nations report. 2022. 4).

5.1.4Poverty:

Economic indicators worldwide have long shown that poverty is a significant problem. Related studies confirm that providing people struggling financially with the necessary resources reduces poverty. It grows the middle class, and bold public investment helps ensure a faster economic recovery. The poverty issue requires policies that could unlock the full potential of a growing economy and middle class, creating a more secure future for all (Kyle, R. 2023.9). Therefore, the Arab League seeks to increase regional and international economic integration to reduce poverty rates in the Arab world. through achieving higher GDP growth rates, allowing a higher degree of inter-Arab specialization, and improving the allocation and distribution of resources.

In many Arab economies, resources can be made available through taxation, military expenditure and energy subsidy reform. Their effectiveness, however, will depend on building a political coalition with the will to implement development policies outside the variants of conventional economic wisdom (Luciani, Giacomo.2017.219-220).

The next part of the study aims to diagnose the reality of poverty in a number of Arab League countries through available

statistical indicators, compared to the population size according to local and international reports for the year 2019.

Table No. (1-8) Poverty Rate in the Number of Arab Countries Compared to the Population

Country	Saudi Arabia	Tunisia	Lebanon	Mauritania	Palestine	Egypt	Algeria
Poverty Rate %	12.7	15	30	30	42.5	32.5	38
country	Libya	Jordan	Syria	Sudan	Yemen	Iraq	Morocco
Poverty Rate %	45	56	80	82	85	41	45

Source: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2019

It is clear from Table (1-8) that poverty rates are high in the Arab oil-exporting countries such as: Saudi Arabia, Libya, Algeria, and Iraq. This expresses the inability of these countries to solve their economic problems without regional economic integration with the League of Arab States.

- Table (1-8) shows high rates of poverty in the Arab world. Therefore, the governments of the Arab League countries must realize that poverty has a social, security and stability dimension. And that poverty has become a negative economic indicator, as a result of the absence of cooperative and integrated Arab policies that affect comprehensive economic security.

- Arab countries that achieve exceptional revenues due to high oil prices must invest these resources within their countries and the Arab region, instead of placing them in foreign investment funds.

5.1.5 Unbalanced Population Growth and Income:

5.1.5.1 Unbalanced Population Growth

Unbalanced population growth in the Arab world is one of the main causes of poverty, as the increase in population size constitutes a heavy burden on various development facilities because it leads to a decrease in the annual growth rate of the per capita share of the gross national product, and an increase in the rate of support burdens (Gouvea, R.Vora, G.2017.634). This requires serious study and objective treatment through family planning in line with available capabilities. In addition, the poor distribution of wealth, poor organization, and injustice in the distribution of income and development projects contribute to the emergence of new poor classes.

The following table (1-9) shows the population of the Arab world according to geographical regions, and the percentage of the population to the total population of the Arab world in 1950 compared to 2019. The population of the Arab world quadrupled over seven decades from what it was in 1950 (77) million people, compared to (428.2) million people in 2019, according to the World Population Review report issued in 2020.

Table No. (1-9) Number and Percentage of the Population of Arab World (1950-2019)

Region Name	Population in 2019/ millions	Percentage in 2019	Population in 1950 / millions	Percentage in 1950	growth rate 1950-2019
Maghreb region	102.5	24%	24	31%	2.12%
Central Arab region	160.5	38%	32	42%	2.36%
The Levant Region and Iraq	78.3	18%	11	14%	2.88%
Peninsula region	86.9	20%	10	13%	3.18%
The Arab world	428.2	100%	77	100%	2.52%

Source: World Population Review, 2020

Table No. (1-9) shows the following:

- The population of the Arab League countries has grown very rapidly, faster than any other region in the world, except for Sub-Saharan Africa (World Population Review.2020.5).

- The region's workforce has increased, urbanization rates have risen, and the food self-sufficiency gap has widened, negatively impacting overall Arab economic security.

- Rapid population growth has not been of much interest to Arab development policymakers in the past several decades.

- Population growth in most Arab League countries has led to a decline in annual per capita income, and a disparity in income rates between oil-producing and non-oil-producing countries.

- There is a negative relationship between economic development and population growth in the Arab League countries. The increasing population growth is reflected in the comprehensive Arab economic security, through the rise in poverty, famine and unemployment rates, and the decline in educational outcomes, infrastructure and per capita income. Theoretically, economist "Thomas Malthus" explained that population growth would lead to a decline in the standard of living in the long run, because the amount of resources on Earth is roughly constant (Burger, J.2020.13).

5.1.5.2 Average annual income per capita:

The following table (1-10) shows the variation in the annual per capita share in US dollars of the gross national income in a number of Arab League countries according to the classification of the World Population Review.

Table No. (10-1) Poorest Economics Countries in the Arab world / Gross National Income per capita-in US Dollars.

country's	Yemen	Somalia	Sudan	Djibouti	Lebanon	Morocco	Syria	Comoros	Jordan	Egypt	Palestine
Per capita \$	3500	8700	3970	5620	5510	7190	4960	1374	5700	4500	7380

Source: World Population Review,2020.

Table No. (1-11) Highest Economics Countries in the Arab world / Gross National Income in US Dollars.

country's	Qatar	Emirates	Kuwait	Bahrain	Saudi Arabia	Oman	Iraq	Libya	Algeria	Iraq	Tunisia
GPD.(1000). US\$	68.6	47.8	38.1	28.7	26.1	28	23.5	11.2	11.1	9.6	9.9

Source: World Economic Outlook Report Issued by the International Monetary Fund, 2022.

Based on the World Economic Outlook Report Issued by the International Monetary Fund, October 2022, Tables No. (1-10), (1-11) show the following:

- There is a large disparity in the annual per capita share of nominal national income among Arab countries, ranging between the highest income of four Gulf countries (Qatar, the Emirates, Kuwait).

- There are Arab countries with per capita income of less than (6000) dollars (Egypt, Yemen, Comoros, Jordan, Lebanon).

- There is a large disparity in the per capita income rate among Arab oil-producing countries and among non-oil Arab countries

- There are clear differences in the per capita annual income rate among Arab oil-producing countries, noting that the highest-income countries among Arab oil-exporting countries have a small population (Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain), compared to (Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Iraq, and Libya).

There are oil countries that suffer from security instability due to civil conflict, which has affected the gross domestic product and per capita income (Iraq and Libya). There are countries that still suffer from low per capita income and have instability problems (Sudan, Palestine, Syria).

5.1.6 Unemployment:

Unemployment is considered one of the most dangerous negative phenomena in various Arab League countries, and it leaves negative impacts on the lives of individuals and Arab societies. Unemployment affected the local economic sector and negatively affects the level of local production, as economic studies confirm that a rise in the unemployment rate by 1% leads to a reduction in the gross domestic product by 2% (Juan, M. 2012.3). In addition to the negative economic effects of unemployment, there are social effects on society, the most prominent of which is an increase in violence, crime, theft, etc., and thus a loss of social security (Pohlan, L. 2019.237-238).

The following study deals with unemployment as one of the economic indicators for a number of Arab League countries.

There are several dimensions and economic data included in the unemployment rates shown in Table No. (1-12) and Table No. (1-13) during the years (2019-2023):

Table No. (1-12) Unemployment Rates (%) in Some Arab Countries

No	country's	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	Iraq	13.7	14	16.5	16.5	15.6
2	Jordan	19	23.3	24	22.9	22.3
3	Palestine	25.3	26.6	26	25.5	30.7
4	Egypt	9.9	9.6	12,5	7.1	7
5	Saudi Arabia	6	5.7	6.9	9.7	7.7
6	Emirates	4.2	5.7	4.3	4.5	4.7
7	Yemen	17	18.1	18.2	17.6	17.5
8	Algeria	11.4	13	12,7	11.6	11.7
9	Kuwait	3.5	2.2	2.3	2.5	3.2

Source: World Economic Index Organization, 2023

- Unemployment rates are high in Arab countries with limited economic resources, such as Jordan and Palestine.
- The unemployment rate is high in oil-exporting Arab countries, such as Iraq, reaching (13.7)% in 2019, and (15.6)% in 2023. This is due to internal and regional instability.
- There are Arab oil-exporting countries that have other sources of income, and they have high unemployment rates in the year (2023), such as (Algeria, Saudi Arabia) with rates of (11.7)%, (7.7)%.

The following table (1-13) also shows a comparison of unemployment rates in the Arab world with other regions of the world:

Table No. (1-13) Unemployment Rates in the World Regions

Arab World	South Asia	Small Pacific Island	East Asia. Pacific	Euro-zone	Low- middle income countries	High-income countries
9.9	4.6	3.7	3.9	6.5	5.1	4.4

Source: World Bank Group website, 2023

- Most Arab countries have higher unemployment rates compared to all world regions (listed in Table (1-13)). While the Emirates (4.7%) and Kuwait (3.2)% (with the smallest Arab population) have lower unemployment rates compared to all world regions.

- The high unemployment rates in the Arab League countries are due to several reasons: the failure of economic development plans in the Arab countries, the annual growth of the Arab labor force, the annual budget deficit, the increase in internal and external debts, the decline in wages, immigration, and young people from Arab countries often face difficulties with the transition from education to employment (Poplavskaya, A.2023.511-529).

6. Conclusion:

Based on the study of economic indicators in the Arab League countries and their impact on comprehensive economic security, the study concluded the following:-

- There is a weakness in cooperation and interdependence between most Arab countries as a result of studying economic indicators related to food security, economic growth, and high rates of inflation, unemployment and poverty, which affected the achievement of comprehensive economic security.

- There is a negative relationship between the total outputs of economic indicators related to regional integration and the objectives of the interdependence theory among the League of Arab States.

- It is difficult to envisage a significant improvement in the development prospects of individual Arab league countries

unless greater success is achieved in pursuing regional integration.

- Implementing the Arab regional economic system requires a new political strategy based on regional integration and the theory of interdependence.

- Through the studied economic indicators related to Arab economic security, which is one of the goals of the League of Arab States, and away from the multiple and different justifications, the study concludes that the League of Arab States and its members have failed to make “trans-formative changes” to activate their role in regional integration and Comprehensive Economic Security, in a manner consistent with the enormous regional and global changes and challenges.

Finally, the study concludes with a recommendation: Regional Integration in the Economy means “that one country provides another with the economic elements it needs and lacks to enhance the economic production process between them”. The relationship in this context may be equal, as is the case in the alliances and economic blocs that arise between developed countries such as the "European Union", or unequal, as appears in the case of the need for integration between the countries of the "Arab League", where there is a large disparity between countries with financial capabilities and countries with economic challenges due to the scarcity of resources. Therefore, Arab countries with capital, especially oil exporters, must direct their investments to Arab countries with limited resources and benefit from their trained human resources.

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