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Anglo-American Orientalism's Contribution to the Rise of Area Studies

Abdel Fattah Naoum| April 2015

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Abstract

Throughout the last century Orientalism has been the subject of critical attention for both Orientalists and Arab thinkers alike, irrespective of their methodological and ideological backgrounds. The goal of this research paper is not to investigate the vast polemical responses to Orientalism, since these have been well documented, but to shed light on the significant transformation occurring in the field of Orientalism in the aftermath of World War II. Even major scholars who have made major contributions to the critique of Orientalism, have at best devoted a few paragraphs of their voluminous works to this topic.[†] For this reason, this paper attempts to highlight critical links left unexplored in well-respected and ground-breaking works on Orientalism, and to observe the drive towards Area Studies in the period post-World War II.

[†] Those referred to are Edward Said, Hassan Hanafi, Abdullah al-Arawi, Sadiq Jalal al-Azm, and others, some of whom, such as Anwar Abdel Malik, were content to discuss the crisis experienced by the field without detailing the phenomenon under study here. Even the writer Zachary Lockman, who will be mentioned below, failed to make a connection between what became known as Area Studies and Orientalism which took into account the geo-economic, political, and ideological levels, even if his contribution is not to be overlooked.

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Introduction

The term Orientalism is derived from the word Orient, while the additional suffix refers to the activity of those who seek to integrate themselves with the people of the Orient and acquire their language, literature, and science. This definition is given by both the Larousse and Oxford dictionaries. The first use of the term was identified in 1630, when it was applied to a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church.[3] The specific academic sense of the term was first used in English in 1779, and then in French in the same year, and in 1838 it was added to the dictionary of the Académie Française.[4]

Etymologically, the word orient refers to the rising of the sun, a definition that raises the challenge on how to designate a specific geographical location. From a geographic perspective, the centrality of the Mediterranean basin at certain historical periods controlled the shaping of geography in a way that made its east east and its west west. The period after this was marked by the shift in the center of power to Western Europe, which strengthened this conception of the existence of an "East."[5]

For some, this East refers to the countries situated east of the Mediterranean prior to the Islamic conquests and, subsequent to them, it came to include both Egypt and North Africa.[6] The settled view of encyclopedias is that the Orient refers to Asiatic lands and islands, and sometimes refers to western Asia which is also called the Near East.[7]

Tunisian thinker and historian Hichem Djaït considers that the intellectual environment created during the twelfth century AD, which grew and developed in the following two centuries and continued right up to the eighteenth century, originated in intense hostility for the "Mohammedian pseudo-prophecy." There was then the widespread

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[3] Ahmed Smilovich, *The Philosophy of Orientalism and Its Effect on Modern Arab Literature* (Cairo: Dar El-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1998), pp. 21-3.

[4] Omar al-Tibi, "Moroccan society in Orientalism," *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi*, year 18, no. 195 (May 1995), p. 86.

[5] Mohammed Fathallah al-Ziyadi, *The Spread of Islam and the Position of Some Orientalists on it* (Tripoli, Libya: General Publishing Organization, [n. d.]), pp. 55-6.

[6] Smilovich, p.23.

[7] Al-Ziyadi, p. 56.

belief that the prophet of Islam was the reason for the halt to the ongoing human progress of Christianity with his "pseudo-prophecy."[8] In addition, most scholars tend to the view that the main aim behind the appearance of Orientalism was to combat Islam.[9] The arrival of Muslims into Spain and Sicily in the Middle Ages convinced the West of the need to study the Islamic message.[10]

The relationship between the East, represented by the Muslims, and the Christian West has been characterized by conflict since its beginnings. There was a period of Muslim advance into western regions which was halted and then followed by a wave of counter-advances by the West against the East, starting with Spain and culminating with the Crusades. During those periods, the writings of Orientalists were not academic in the strict sense of the word as much as they were a weapon of war propaganda. This was to such an extent that works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD are typically impulsive. In this context came the effort of Abbot Peter the Venerable to attack Muslims and his blaming of Christians for making a truce with them. He incited Christians to adopt violence against Muslims and was engaged in the translation of the Quran into Latin.[11] In the mid twelfth century, four translations of the Quran were published with an introduction by Abbot Peter, who also translated a biography of the prophet and a history of the Caliphs up to Yazid and the death of Hussein.[12] It should be noted that the first translation of the Quran appeared in 1143, prior to the fall of Edessa in December of that year, and was attributed to Father Butrus (1092-1157).[13]

Edward Said, a foremost critic of Orientalist discourse, sees that the "term" as an epistemological act remains vague and relative since it encompasses the

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[8] Lutfi ibn Milad, "Orientalism in the thought of Hichem Djaït," *Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi*, year 33, no. 376 (June 2010), pp. 119-20.

[9] Zahir Awwad al-Almaie, *With the Exegetes and the Orientalists on the Marriage of the Prophet (PBUH) to Zaynab bint Jahsh: An Analytical Study*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Eissa al-Babi, 1976), p. 23.

[10] Abdel Jalil Chalebi, *Islam and the Orientalists* (Cairo: Dar Al-Shaab, [1977]), p. 27.

[11] Abdel Jalil Chalebi, *Orientalist Images*, vol. 1, pp. 25-6.

[12] Ibid., p. 27

[13] Johann Funk, *History of the Orientalist Movement: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Europe until the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, translated by Omar Lutfi al-Alim, vol. 2 (Benghazi, Libya: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Wataniya, [n. d.]), p.17.

implementation of European colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even if Orientalism was no longer what it had been, it remained present in Western universities and academies as a repository of sectarian mentalities and assumptions regarding the Orient and the oriental.[14] This edifice, which was linked to European modernity, would solidify in the post-modern period when the electronic world reinforced the West's stereotypes of the East. Television and cinema forced information into ever more similar and stereotypical molds. According to Edward Said, three things led to a highly politicized conception of the East: the history of popular prejudice against the Arabs and Islam in the West; the conflict between the Arabs and Zionism; and the absence of any opportunity for the unification of a Western/Arab-Islamic identity. The Near East is unified by the policies of the great powers because it contains the Jews who love peace, and the evil terrorist Arabs[15]

General Vision and Approach of the Paper

On the basis of the above two hypotheses will be validated in this paper. First, orientalism took off from an intellectual context which was formed by a set of representations of the East, including the creation of the East itself. This intellectual context remained strongly present in new academic forms in the post-World War II world. Second, the never ending interaction between power in its economic and political forms and knowledge is what controls the large academic projects that will be discussed here and that translate this dialectical nexus into power.

Most of the critical studies on Orientalism have failed to concentrate on its academic extensions, and the political agendas that these extensions have translated into, and behind which are concealed enormous economic interests for the states that directed, nurtured, supported, and guided what became known as Area Studies. For this reason, this study will adopt a multilevel approach that links the ideological foundation (ideas), which includes the consciousness woven by orientalist writings and its implications with the political level (agendas and programs), connected as it is to contemporary forms when dealing with the artificial geographies created following World War II, and the economic level (interests), which is connected to the interests of huge financial and

[14] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Knowledge, Power and Discourse*, translated into Arabic by Kamal Abu Deeb (Beirut, Arab Research Institute, 1981). p. 37.

[15] Ibid., p.59.

industrial monopolies, which are mostly those with the greatest influence over policy making in the world under study.

The unique element in this study is that it connects Orientalism and the conceptions it made about the East with the role of strategic thinking in the twentieth century. It maintains that strategic thought paved the way for developments in the field of Orientalism. After World War II, the geographical reformulation encapsulated by strategic thinking (the rise of the concept of the Middle East) coincided with the crisis in Orientalism. This became visible in an academic form that was nurtured by the American geopolitical and cultural vision of the region, all at the pinnacle of America's post-World War II ascendency.

In terms of dealing with the events and literature on the subject, the paper does not adopt a chronological logic, but observes instead the objective contexts and geopolitical dimensions of ideas, in that it is the real practical (geopolitical) significance of the ideas that enables them to survive for longer and makes them susceptible to beneficial analysis and interpretation.

Features of the Anglo-American School of Orientalism

This school of thought is associated with the colonialist reality imposed by Great Britain and the United States upon the countries of the East, and then the Middle East. It should be pointed out that traditional military colonialism and contemporary cultural colonialism both serve the same agenda and are linked with the appearance of industrialized societies in Europe and America.[16]

The British Experience

What distinguishes British Orientalism from its French counterpart is perhaps the strong and complex relationship between Britain and the East. After the French withdrawal from Egypt in 1801, Egypt fell under the rule of the Ottoman commander of Albanian origins Mohammed Ali, who intended to completely restructure the Egyptian economy. His efforts, however, produced the opposite effect, since the increase in cotton production led to Egypt becoming integrated in a world economy that centered around

[16] Tayyeb Tayzini, *From Tradition to Revolution: On a Proposed Theory of the Arab Tradition*, 2nd edn. (Beirut: Dar Ibn Khaldun, 1978), vol. 1, p. 193.

Europe, a matter that Mohammed Ali persistently ignored. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 reinforced Egypt's position in British economic strategy at the time. This was followed by Egypt becoming increasingly in debt to Britain, and some allies of Mohammed Ali took this to be a means to extricate Egypt from its crises, but it ended up with British intervention in Egypt and its occupation in 1882. Britain's absolute rule over Egypt did not decrease until 1922 and diminished further in 1936. The last British soldier left Egypt in 1956 as per the evacuation agreement between Gamal Abdel Nasser and Britain. The British returned a few months later, attacking Egypt together with France and Israel following the nationalization of the Suez Canal.[17]

At that time, and particularly once Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the canal, Britain felt its power declining and falling and responded with tripartite aggression. The United States, on the other hand, disapproved of the unbridled desire of the British and the French to maintain their control over their old colonies. US President Eisenhower intervened to force those two powers to withdraw.[18] Within this context, it is perhaps apt to explain the role Britain played in the region and the power that the United States inherited from it, and how this reflected on the nature of Anglo-American Orientalism as a whole, but especially in Britain which was present throughout the East, including the Gulf region, and for whom Orientalism was an extension of the logic of imperialism.[19]

Anthropologist and Orientalist Raphael Patai held that all the brickbats thrown by Arab researchers at the Orientalist experience are down to an Arab arrogance and the belief that Orientalists are agents of their countries' foreign ministries who deliberately intend to falsify and distort Arab history. Such statement confirms the link between the general assumptions of Orientalism and of Western regimes in particular, as well as thier political decision makers whose policies must somehow be drawn on the basis of data

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[17] Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, Arabic translation by Sherif Younis (Cairo: Shuruq, 2007), pp. 136-7.

[18] Hassan Mosdak, *Dimensions of the Franco-American Conflict over Morocco, the Middle East and Africa*, Wujhat Nazar Pamphlets 8 (Rabat: Wujhat Nazar Pamphlets, 2005), pp. 152-3.

[19] Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick, *Cultural Theory: The Key Concepts*, translated by Mohammed al-Jawhari and Hana al-Jawhari (Cairo: National Center for Translation, 2009), pp. 43-4.

and interpretations, be they accurate or wrong, concerning specific regions and their languages, customs, and cultures.[20]

Some have admitted that official institutions of their countries supported Orientalist studies. In this respect, the French philosopher Roland Barthes said, "We all enjoy these regimes, we gratefully admit that society as represented by governments and parliaments places at our disposal the required means to carry out Orientalist research and to continue our educational activity." In a memorandum to officials at Cambridge University in 1639, a group of scholars petitioning to establish a chair in Arabic and Islamic studies wrote: "The center has in mind to serve the interests of king and country by working to make trade with the lands of the East flourish and to expand the borders of the Church and spread Christianity among those who still remain in the darkness of ignorance."[21]

These juxtapositions affirm that British Orientalism had a political background, or that among the concerns of this school was a preoccupation with political concerns and the presentation of scientific data for decision makers in the empire. This was something with a long history in the West and is manifest in how policy makers listened to science and went along with its ideas and conclusions, even if some Arab intellectuals do not consider Orientalism to be a political or colonial operation, but the expression of a field of knowledge and episteme developed by the West at a particular stage in its evolution.[22] This view is demolished by examples that confirm that many Orientalists presented their research to their political leaders. For example, the English Orientalist Edward Lane came to Egypt in 1825 to study Arabic. He returned afterwards to study the life of the people of Cairo first hand. Lane devoted himself to that project and the Cairenes nicknamed him Mansour Effendi. His devotion culminated with the publication of *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* in 1836, a book that was widely read

[20] Mohammed Jasim al-Mawsuei, *Orientalism in Arab Thought* (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1993), p. 27.

[21] Al-Ziyadi, pp. 84-5.

[22] Abdel Muta'al Mohammed al-Jabri, *Orientalism, the Intellectual Face of Colonialism: A Study of the History, Aims, and Methods of Orientalism Hidden in the Intellectual Attack on Islam* (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1995), p. 126.

in England, Germany, and America, and used during the preparations to invade and occupy Egypt.[23]

The method adopted by agents of the British Empire revolved around the importance of studying the life and culture of the countries under colonial influence. At the first Orientalist Congress in 1873, the empire's servicemen in Britain had in mind the political importance of knowledge, on the basis that it was one of the components of power and dominance. Although Orientalism was at heart political, in that on the surface it grew in a framework of linguistic interest and travels within Western academia whose foundation was coupled with the beginnings of western expansionist tendencies, it was nevertheless accompanied and paralleled by an intellectual and academic tendency enshrined by individual wills, as was the case with John Westlake in his *Chapters on the Principles of International Law.*[24]

There is no doubt that Orientalism and politics served each other. But what is significant is that "the clash of Western and Eastern civilization" was not negative, but positive and connected to becoming familiar with the two civilizations and aimed at useful and productive knowledge. This does not detract from the fact that some pioneering Orientalists were in the service of war, colonialism, trade, and politics.[25] In the same context, it should be pointed out that Evelyn Baring (1841-1917), who was ennobled as the Earl of Cromer, controller-general and British representative in Egypt when it was a British protectorate, and Egypt's de facto ruler, wrote in retirement a book, *Modern Egypt*, where he put forward a detailed account of events in Egypt over the course of three decades and made an appraisal of the British occupation.[26]

Some scholars of British Orientalism hold the view that this school of thought was characterized by its greater objectivity, insight, gravity, and patience in obtaining results

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[23] Ibid., p. 133.

[24] Al-Mawsuei, pp. 29-31.

[25] Abdel Karim Ghallab, "Introductory Preface" in *Morocco in Orientalist Studies: Seminar Proceedings* (Marrakesh, Morocco: The Moroccan Academy, 1993), p. 19. It should be noted that many Arab students of Orientalism, such as Malik ibn Nabi, realized its importance in that it encouraged the Arabs to study their tradition.

[26] Lockman, p. 165.

than other schools.[27] But this is no more than a result of its interests which were greater than French interests in the East.[28] British travelers in the twentieth century had an obsession with representing the political relations that ought to exist between Britain and the region between India—a constant for them—and the Middle East, or the Levant, and even the literary creations among them, such as Disraeli's Tancred, shared the same view.[29]

The intentions of English Orientalists were two-fold. Imperial orientalists, such as Lawrence, Edward Henry Palmer, Hogarth and Burton, used their residency in the East for academic observation without sacrificing their individual subjectivity. While another tendency to fulfil the European-British view was to acquire the knowledge available to people in the East, this was only made available because they were European. That is, these Orientalists tried to be Europeans in the East while viewing the East as a space controlled by Europe.[30]

The American Experience

The crisis of Orientalism has many causes including the nature of the subject (the Orient) which was no longer far removed from European scholars after World War II, and whose classical knowledge became unnecessary for its understanding. The East was also no longer under European colonial rule—militarily at least.[31] In addition, the East had no real geographical existence, since it is mainly the product of Western Euro-American perception. Even Islam, which westerners link with the East is only one of many eastern religions, including Christianity, which the West itself adopted. Entire cities connected with the East, such as Constantinople, are in fact European from a true geographic perspective.[32]

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[27] Smilovich, p.223.

[28] Said, p. 203.

[29] Ibid., p. 204.

[30] Ibid., p. 208.

[31] Janosh Danitski, "Orientalism Between East and West," translated by Adnan Mubarak, *Al-Istishraq*, no. 1 (January 1987), p. 51.

[32] Khalil Samaan, "Orientalism and Orientalists," *Al-Lisan All-Arabiya*, no. 20 (1983), p. 191.

For this and many other reasons, many students of Orientalism hold that Orientalism came to an end with the turn towards fieldwork, despite the continuation of its essence in these new academic formations. The growth of American interests in the region, and, in the 1950s, an Orientalist like Hamilton Gibb assuming the directorship of the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies[33] led to a retreat in the field. This was viewed as the preparation for more specialist studies in the Middle East Studies centers that spread in American academia.[34]

This new form, termed Area Studies in the United States, emerged out of the crisis experienced by Orientalism. The features of this crisis are explained, without going into detail on the new field, in a well-regarded article by Anwar Abdel Malik that appeared in 1963. This crisis led American academics to adopt cognitive models that were in line with the rise of a strong Arab nationalist movement alongside the transformations in the period post-World War II.[35]

The word Orientalism began to disappear from American academic circles to be replaced by other terms more descriptive of the discipline. At the 29th International Orientalist Congress, attendees agreed on the necessity of dropping the concept of Orientalism, in conformity with international changes and the evolution of the struggle of Eastern peoples. The following Congress was named the International Congress of Asian and North African Studies, and Orientalism became divided into various specializations such as history, sociology, anthropology, economics, politics, comparative sociology, and development.[36]

The American school pioneered these studies after World War II. The figure of the Muslim became key in the American *imaginaire* which underwent a revival based on a new specialist Anglo-American methodology concerned with the social sciences. This worked to divide traditional Orientalism into new parts that served old schools of

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[33] A discussion follows of the term the Middle East and its contexts, emergence, and uses, as well as its transformation into a term for a region that sometimes lent its name to studies of the region, which were usually referred to as Area Studies.

[34] Al-Mawsuei, pp. 36-7.

[35] Ibid., pp. 45-8.

[36] Nasr Mohammed Arif, *Contemporary Political Theories of Development: A Comparative Critical Study from the Perspective of Islamic Civilization* (Cairo: Dar Al-Qari Al-Arabi, [1981]), p.135.

thought. Arabs became present in American academic life and in the business world, in a reflection of the new embodiment of power in the region. Britain and France were no longer at the forefront as powers in international politics. The American empire supported the proliferation of subdisciplines, and acquired regional experts who claimed regional knowledge and experience that was placed at the disposal of governments and business circles alike.[37]

The American school's real contribution to the history of Orientalism is manifest in the transformation of Orientalism from a branch of philology into a true and useful empirical form of knowledge, from a vague perception of the East into a specialization in the social sciences. Orientalists moved away from learning the languages of the East and turned into social scientists who did fieldwork and applied their knowledge about the East and to the East. This transformation occurred when the United States found itself in the position that had been occupied by Britain and France shortly before, while the United States had previously had sporadic research on the East, as represented by the likes of authors like Mark Twain.[38]

In essence, the American school of Orientalism is an organic extension of the British school. Its roots were planted by English and Lebanese immigrants to America. They drew up the research methodology and style for the Americans who had a thirst for Arabic and Islamic studies. This school was interested in the entire East, particularly the political upheavals, ideological conceptions, artistic features, cultural riches, demography, and so on.[39]

American Orientalism was constructed on a cultural context influenced by Eastern culture, as well as the endeavor of American philosophy to free itself of its European heritage, and hence its need to shift its perspectives towards the non-European tradition.[40] Some scholars hold that the roots of American Orientalism go back to American conceptions of the God and religion of Muslims, without neglecting the contribution of travelers and immigrants fleeing religious persecution who played a role

[37] Said, p. 285.

[38] Ibid., p. 290.

[39] Smilovich, p.224.

[40] J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*, translated by Shawki Jalal, Alam al-Marifa 346 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 2007), p. 185.

in consolidating this image. This was particularly so after American independence when America was transformed into God's symbolic kingdom, a move that has impacted negative perceptions of Americans towards the God of Muslims and their Arabian prophet.[41]

When Western strategic thinking changed as a result of the emerging tendency to divide the East itself into new regions, such as the Middle East and North Africa region and subdivisions of Asia, the use of these designations became widespread in academic and media usage, both in the West and then the Arab world. At the time, Bernard Lewis expressed his astonishment at the use of these new terms applied to the Arab world, particularly as it had become more acceptable for people in the region to use it rather than the term "the East" which was much older.[42] In fact, it remained a shaky concept that could be reproduced in different forms since its origin till now, as will be made clear below.

Thus, Orientalism's entering a period of crisis and the birth pangs of the transformation from its old methodologies and subjects—or even its struggle to whitewash its past which no doubt angered the inhabitants of the region in question—were all reasons that impelled major Orientalists to seek new refuges. Would these be provided to them by the new ways of thinking being followed by strategic thought, which were a product of US strategies in the East in the post-World War II period?

The Influence of Anglo-American Strategic and Geo Strategic Thought

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, western scholars of the East have found in the concept of the East a vague and fuzzy meaning. A new term, the Middle East, along with others that intersected with is such as the Near East and the Far East, appeared.[43] The emergence of the Middle East is linked with US navy Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) who made the term current in Anglo-American strategic

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[41] Ghassan Ghadab, "American Orientalism," *Middle East Affairs*, no. 105 (2002), pp. 92-3.

[42] Ahmed Salim al-Bursan, "The Development of the Concept of the Middle East and Western Strategic Thinking," *Magazine of the University of Sharjah*, year 3, no. 3 (October 2006), p. 140.

[43] In this regard we will overlook the fine distinction between "term" and "concept."

thinking in 1902 in the context of his theory on the influence of naval power on history. Mahan wrote an article, "The Persian Gulf and International Relations" in the British *National Review*. His key idea was that if Britain wished to rule India, it had to control the route leading to the Gulf. In this way he drew the attention of the British to the importance of the Gulf, warning that Russia might swallow it up, and in consequence sever the imperial route to India. When Mahan coined this term, he was evoking what he had written on East Asia during the Sino-Japanese war when Britain and the United States had imposed an open door policy on China. This led Mahan to make a link between the Middle East and the Far East, at a time when the concept of the Near East went no further than the legacy of the Ottoman state in the Balkans.[44]

The adoption of this term, and the naval doctrine that it gave rise to in the United States thereafter, enabled the control of the Philippines, Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Caribbean followed by Central America.[45] The term Middle East did not just refer to a specific geographic region, or to a region whose people shared a language, religion and culture, but it was the result of political orientations and continued to evolve. This made its absorption achieve gains for the colonial powers elsewhere in the world.[46]

Another reason for the coining of the term was Mahan's desire to draw the attention of the British to the German threat in the region, who were allegedly planning to construct a railway line from Berlin to Baghdad.[47] It was also used to signify the region whose center lay in the Arabian/Persian Gulf, which was not referred to by the terms Near East or Far East, for the former centered around the Ottoman state, and the latter around China, whereas the Middle East was situated between them.[48] According to George

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[44] Al-Bursan, p. 145.

[45] Lockman, p. 170.

[46] Emadeddine Shaheen, "The Middle East in the Vision of the Western Academy and in the Study of International Relations" in: *Session on Islamic Methodology in the Social Sciences—Political Science as Example (29/7 to 2/8/2000)*, compiled and overseen by Nadia Mahmoud Mustafa and Seifeddine Abdel Fattah, Islamic Methodology 18 (Cairo: Civilization Center for Political Studies, 2002), p. 118.

[47] In the context of European competition over Asian and African colonies, which ended with the Sykes-Picot division and the losses that were borne by the states defeated in World War I, specifically the Ottoman Empire and Germany.

[48] Mamduh Mahmoud Mansur, *The American-Soviet Conflict in the Middle East* (Cairo: Madbouli, [n. d.]), p. 40.

Lenczowski, this region stretches from Egypt in the west to Afghanistan in the east; the Middle East Institute in Washington defines it as stretching from Morocco to Indonesia; the British Institute for International Relations holds that the Middle East comprises Iran, Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula, the Fertile Crescent, and Cyprus.[49]

There is a mistaken idea that the concept of the Middle East goes back to World War II, which, at the beginning of the 1940s, saw the British set up a Middle East Supply Center in Cairo. At that time, the British announced the formation of a military command in Cairo which was named the Middle East Command and whose authority extended over the region from Libya to the west to Baghdad and Basra to the east. The United States established a command center for US forces in the Middle East immediately following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. As indicated above, the term appeared with Mahan and was picked up by the head of the foreign desk at *The Times* newspaper, Chirol, who wrote some twenty articles on the issue of the Middle East. He gave Mahan credit for coining the term, but Chirol got the credit for publicizing the term in the strategic writings of the West. It should be pointed out that Thomas Edward Gordon, an officer who served four decades in India defending British interests, referred to the Middle East in 1900, that is two years before Mahan.[50]

The issue of who first coined the term is of lesser significance than the uses it and its academic and strategic offshoots were put to. The uncertainty over the date and background to the appearance of the term also affects some western writings. For example, the American Orientalist and anthropologist Carleton S. Coon wrote in his 1951 book *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East* that the first appearance of the term was during World War II when it was used to describe the British military command in Cairo.[51]

Behind the coinage of the term, or at least its use, was the British desire to replace the term the Near East which France had used since the end of the nineteenth century. This conformed to British strategic perspectives in the region in the period after Sykes-

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[49] Ahmed Arif Irhayyil al-Kafarneh, "Political Effects on the Arab Regional Order in Light of the Occupation of Iraq," *The Damascus University Journal of Economics and Law*, year 25, no. 2 (2009), p. 622.

[50] Al-Bursan, p. 146.

[51] Carleton Coon, *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East*, translated by Burhan Dajani and review by Ihsan Abbas (Beirut: Dar Al-Thaqafa, 1959), p. 10.

Picot which had divided Syria and Iraq between the French and the British and created the British mandate in Palestine and therefore control of the land and sea routes to defend India in British plans.[52]

The end of the century witnessed the spread of other terms deriving from the Middle East, such as the new Middle East, the greater Middle East, the Middle Eastern order, the Middle Eastern market, and Middle Eastern culture. The term was accepted in Arab and Islamic cultural environments to an extent that some media and academic platforms have adopted it despite its colonialist nature. These include *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat* [Middle East] newspaper, the Middle East Studies Center in Iran,[53] and Middle Eastern studies centers in Lebanon, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries.

In 1911, Lord Curzon, then ruler of India, used the expression to refer to the regions of Turkey, the Arabian Gulf, and Iran, on the view that they formed the route to India.[54] After that, Mark Sykes proposed to the British cabinet the creation of an Islamic Bureau in the region to gather information. It was agreed to set up an Arab bureau in Cairo in charge of undertaking intelligence gathering on the region, and which was attached to British intelligence in Sudan in the period 1916-18.[55] In the first half of the twentieth century Britain was interested in spreading British radio in the Middle East to gather intelligence and keep the region's masses in the dark.[56]

In the interwar period, the term Middle East was linked with military circles in the British Empire in the Arab region. British military bases in Mesopotamia were under the Middle East command, and during World War II this came to include land and air commands under the term "Middle East HQ."[57] The term had an effect with regard to the politics that lay behind it, resulting in what were called the regional regimes. It has become possible for us to talk of a Middle Eastern regional order, despite the

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[52] Abdel Fattah Ibrahim, *On the Road to India*, 2nd edn. (Baghdad: Al-Ahali Publications, 1935), p. 326.

[53] Al-Bursan, p. 140.

[54] Mansur, p. 39.

[55] Al-Bursan, p. 148.

[56] Douglas Boyd, "Sharq al-Adna Radio the Voice of Britain," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, year 5, no. 5 (Spring 2007), pp. 85-6.

[57] Al-Bursan, p. 150.

geographic and political problems posed by the use of the term in Arabic writings, not to mention the problems inherent in the use of other more authentic terms such as the Arab nation,[58] which are often replete with national sentiment, and whose appeal extends from the rise of the Nasserite nationalist wave linked with the strategy of Arab national unity conditional upon national independence. This meant they were expressions that concealed a rejection of everything colonial, whether it be Orientalism or Anglo-American strategic thinking in particular.

The term Middle East prepared the ground for pushing through British and American policies in the region and helped secondarily to bring about a sub-regional order in the form of a region capable of being studied and exploited in every way—academic, economic, and financial, such as the appearance of the British Middle East Bank for example,[59] and Middle East research institutions. The meaning attached to the Middle East, however, did not just connote British strategies in the region, but went through transformations and developments to reflect a greater role for the United States and Israel. A discussion of the concepts of the new Middle East and the greater Middle East will be treated in further detail in this paper, but beforehand it is necessary to consider the complex and tangled relations of the United States and the centrality of Israel in its policies.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century the United States evinced little interest in the region, and in fact its only interest was embodied in the Christian missionary groups that evolved into academic institutions, such as the American Universities in Cairo and in Beirut.[60] After World War II, however, the region witnessed many events, most significantly the launch of liberation movements in a number of countries and the beginning of the war for Palestine that ended with Jewish colonization and the declaration of the establishment of Israel in 1948.[61] In this respect, the process of

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[58] Fawaz Gergis, *The Arab Regional Order and the Major Powers: A Study in Arab-Arab and Arab-International Relations* (Beirut: Arab Unity Studies Center, 1997), p. 25.

[59] Fred Halliday, *The Political Conflict in the Arabian Peninsula*, translated and foreword by Mohammed al-Rumaihi (Beirut: Dar Al-Saqi, 2008), p. 214.

[60] Ahmed Abdel Rahim Mustafa, *The United States and the Arab Mashreq*, Alam al-Marifa 4 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 1978), pp. 5-6.

[61] *Middle East News in the World Press: Study Undertaken by the International Press Institute in Zurich, Switzerland*, translated by Abdel Latif Hamza and Walim al-Miri (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, [1961]), p. 4.

embracing Israel would shift from Britain to the United States, and that was for a set of reasons, the most important of which goes back to the withdrawal of Britain and the advance of the United States after World War II. The Jews had also laid the necessary institutional groundwork in the United States.[62] At that period in particular the starting point for American interest was not just to confront possible threats to the oil fields, but also to confront the danger of the Soviet challenge on the strategic level during the Cold War.[63]

Although the importance of the oil industry was greater in the United States than in any other state,[64] studies related to energy issues since the end of the 1990s indicate that the world economic system is moving to gradually give up reliance on oil in favor of other less environmentally-damaging energy sources,[65] as well as new extraction technologies which will make the United States free from reliance on Gulf oil around 2020. This would represent a revolution in American strategies and the nature of the international order.[66]

American backing for Israel led to the United States being protected from the danger of communism in the Middle East, and protected oil supplies until the end of the second Gulf War [1991]. The US fleet filled Gulf ports. Israel was an American arms dump until the Americans were able to stockpile weapons in Egypt and Saudi Arabia,[67] given that the United States endeavored to found NATO at that period on a strategic basis of

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[62] Abdel Malik Khalaf al-Tamimi, *Foreign Settlement in the Arab World: The Arab Maghreb, Palestine and the Arab Gulf: A Comparative Historical Study*, Alam Al-Marifa 71 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 1983), p. 91.

[63] Hussein Agha, Ahmed Samih al-Khalidi and Qasim Jaafar, *The Western Military Presence in the Middle East*, Strategic Studies Series 9 (Beirut, Arab Institute for Studies and Publishing, [1982]), p. 2.

[64] Mohammed al-Rumaihi, *Oil and International Relations: An Arab Perspective*, Alam Al-Marifa 52 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 1982), p. 29.

[65] In the framework of the Kyoto Agreement that stipulates that the main sources of emissions disrupting the environmental balance are the industrialized states of western Europe and the United States.

[66] As reported by most news reports.

[67] Munir al-Hamsh, *The Condemned Peace: The New Middle East from Greater Israel to Great Israel*, 2nd edn. (Cairo: Madbouli, 1997), pp. 315-16.

confronting the Soviets, and not on a regional basis, and so the alliance included states across more than one continent.[68]

Egypt played a pivotal role in the Middle East in the post-World War II period. Mohammed Naguib, with the leadership of the free officers, intended to remove the monarchy in 1952. He mobilized the Egyptians behind the aspiration to end the British occupation which had then lasted for 70 years.[69] In this respect, the US State Department expressed its anxiety over developments in Egypt and the possibility that these developments would reflect on the conflict between Egypt and Britain. Jefferson Caffery, US ambassador to Egypt in 1952, spoke of the necessity of the State Department preparing to confront the British government which misunderstood the nature of the situation in Egypt.[70] The struggle raging over Egypt at that time reflected a British-French conflict on one side and a British-American conflict on another side. However, the coming to power of Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954, the nationalization of the Suez Canal, and the subsequent building of the Aswan High Dam, can all be explained as a wave of national independence led by Nasserism and the Egyptian move towards the Soviet camp.

At that period and after, during the peak of American ascendancy, the United States enlisted all its capacity in the Middle East region, especially after the 1973 war and the success of the Iranian revolution and the defeat of the Soviet project in Afghanistan. There is nothing strange about American interest in intelligence information about the Middle East and its leaders, since the CIA under Stansfield Turner was interested in monitoring the hidden workings of governments in the region, most importantly the Egyptian government after Sadat. The CIA also supplied him with information and warnings of the danger of coups and assassinations,[71] to say nothing of the strong

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[68] Mohammed Aziz Shukri, *Alliances and Coalitions in International Politics*, Alam Al-Marifa 7 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 1978), pp. 33-4.

[69] Farouq Guwaida, *Who Writes the History of the July Revolution?* (Cairo: Dar Al-Gharib, 2000), p. 255.

[70] Zahir Mohammed al-Hasanawi, *The American Vision of the Egyptian-British Conflict: From the Burning of Cairo to the Revolution*, Strategic Studies 26 (Abu Dhabi: Emirati Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1999), pp. 43-4.

[71] Bob Woodward, *Target Middle East: The CIA's Secret Wars*, study and edited by Sami al-Razzaz (Cairo: Sina Publications, 1990), p. 17.

presence of American decisions in the region, such as the decision to stop military operations on February 27, 1991 following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.[72]

In this context, specifically in 1991 at the end of the second Gulf War, a new term of American-Israeli origin emerged: the new Middle East. This expressed a new stage in Arab-Israeli peace and an attempt to integrate Israel into the region through peace agreements and economic cooperation. Shimon Peres, from within the extreme right-wing Sharon government, promoted this term in his book *The New Middle East*, where he affirmed the need to build a Middle Eastern economic market on liberal foundations.[73] The issue of the new Middle East continued to be understood through clusters of states comprising the Iraqi-Iranian cluster, the Lebanese-Syrian cluster, and the Palestinian-Israeli cluster. Three sensitive issues were involved: nuclear proliferation, sectarianism, and the challenge of political reform, all matters that together defined the features of the new Middle East.[74]

In 1995, a new term, the greater Middle East emerged with the contribution of the United States and its strategies in the region. It appeared in the yearly strategic report of the Institute for National Strategic Studies of the US Defense Department, which devoted a chapter to the greater Middle East from the Maghreb to the borders of China. Bush junior reused the term in 2004 at the G8 summit.[75] Some went as far as to see this stage as a new American century, in that the term the greater Middle East came to be linked with overarching strategies for the region and the events of September 11, 2001.[76] Many analysts and observers view the invasion of Afghanistan, then of Iraq, and then the involvement with the popular uprisings of 2011 as all being elements defining the greater Middle East as sought by the United States and its alliance by

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[72] Hassan Nafie, "International Reactions Towards the Invasion," in: *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait: Lead Up, Events and Repsonses*, Alam Al-Marifa 195 (Kuwait: National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, 1995), p. 464.

[73] Al-Bursan, p. 154-5.

[74] Marina Ottaway [and others], "The New Middle East," Report of the Carnegie Middle East Center, p. 5, www.carnegieendowment.org/pubs.

[75] Ahmed Salim al-Bursan [and others], "The Greater Middle East Initiative," *Strategy Observer* (January 2000), p.20.

[76] Emadeddine Shaheen, "The Greater Middle East: Echoes of the Western Vision," *My Nation in the World* (Cairo: Civilization Center for Political Studies, [n. d.]), p. 214.

drowning the region in chaos and sectarian fighting with the goal of dividing and then ruling regional capabilities and blocking the path of the rising Asian powers.

Among the additions to the term the greater Middle East was the placing of NATO member Turkey outside the Middle East, and the inclusion of Iran and Afghanistan.[77] This rejigging makes it clear that the term the Middle East and its derivatives serve to reflect the complex nature of the relations and interests between America and Israel, since the Zionist lobby in the United States contributes to the drawing up of American policy towards the region, just as American arms companies do—the lobby aims to defend the existence of a strong Israel while the arms companies aim to guarantee a market for their weapons—principally Israel.[78] According to its American formulation, the greater Middle East includes the 1999 Eisenstadt economic project for North Africa that aimed to transform the region into an open market, which the United States justified with its project to spread democracy in the Arab world. This culminated in 2004 with the designation of the region as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).[79]

Since the beginning of the third millennium, the issues of Iraq and Palestine have been at the forefront of American foreign policy on the region. In 2002, the United States intervened over the issue of a Palestinian state to prepare the ground for the invasion of Iraq.[80] Given that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the most important manifestation of the predicament of the Middle East, a road map to solve the conflict was announced in an American statement in 2003 and presented to the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government.[81] Also in that year, the NATO invasion of Iraq was executed. According to some, the US invasion of Iraq fulfilled the call of Anglo-American Orientalist Bernard Lewis for the United States to invade the Middle East and sow the

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[77] Al-Bursan, p. 157.

[78] Abdullah Salih, "Who Draws Up American Policy in the Arab Region?" *Strategic Observer*, no. 16, part 3 (June 2008), p. 8.

[79] Hassan Mosdek, *The Wikileaks Documents and the Secrets of the Spring of Arab Revolutions* (Casablanca: Arab Cultural Center, 2012), p. 69.

[80] Mahir Abed, "The Palestinian State Between America and Israel," *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, May 30, 2011.

[81] Mahir Malandi, "The Road Map: Between Text and Implementation," *The Damascus University Journal of Economics and Law*, year 25, no. 2 (2009), p. 392.

seeds of democracy there.[82] Such readings, however, strongly echo conspiracy theories, even if this does not negate the fact that a conspiracy exists, but the rule is the firm link between Anglo-American strategic decision making and the production of knowledge.

One can confidently conclude that the essential American goal in the Middle East was and remains the protection of Israel's security to permit the smooth flow of oil and smooth navigation from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. This central goal was and remains largely achievable.[83] However, the alliance led by the United States faces challenges that threaten its interests in the face of the rise of new powers in the heart of Asia, Latin America, and South Africa. In consequence, the alliance is being forced to modify its priorities to which it mobilizes everything, starting with ideas and knowledge and ending with military interventions and keeping abreast of and capitalizing on popular protests.

However, what concerns this paper is the drive towards Area Studies, starting with the transformation of Orientalists—in the aftermath of the crisis in Orientalism—and strategic experts and thinkers, and ending with the coalescence of an academic field to keep abreast of American strategies in the region. So what is the nature of these studies and their models?

The Rise of Area Studies

There is a dialectical connection between the strategic level and the Orientalist heritage in the Anglo-American world which resulted in the birth of geographical terms that strategic thinking introduced to key forums for strategic decision making. In turn, this led to the birth of sub-regions with a strategic dimension, most importantly the Middle East, and then to the division of Asian and African geography in order to draw up policy—policies that are deeply linked with the interests of giant economic monopolies in oil and gas, and other commodities. The intellectual and academic arm of these

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[82] Islam Dili, "The Bernard Lewis Plan to Sow the Seeds of Arab Democracy Under Test in Iraq," Strategic Studies (Al-Kashef Center for Strategic Monitoring and Studies, 2005), pp. 8-9.

[83] Flynt Leverett and Tamara Wittes*, The Road Ahead: Middle East Policy in the Bush Administration's Second Term*, commentary Manar al-Shurbagi, Tarjamat 14 (Cairo: International Center for Future and Strategic Studies, 2006), p. 18.

policies is produced by regional studies centers which testify to an exceptional union between strategy experts and thinkers and Anglo-American Orientalists who were attracted to these new formations.

The importance of this union is highlighted by the actions of the Orientalist Hamilton Gibb in inaugurating this new form of Orientalist knowledge. After World War II, Gibb, in his capacity as director of the Middle East Studies Center at Harvard University, gave a lecture entitled "Regional Studies: A Reassessment." He indicated that the East was too important to be left to Orientalists. This was a candid call to educate students in the fields of finance and business and to undertake inter-disciplinary studies. Research no longer required the traditional Orientalist who applied outdated information to the East, but it had become necessary to move towards regional studies.[84]

The Middle East obtained the lion's share of the studies undertaken in Britain under the rubric of Middle Eastern Studies.[85] Perhaps the huge number of research and academic platforms concerned with the affairs of this region on every level means that delimiting the countries included within the region remains controversial. The journal *Middle East and North Africa* published annually in London defines the Middle East as Turkey, Iran, Cyprus, the Fertile Crescent, Israel, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Afghanistan, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, where Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria are known collectively as North Africa. The Royal Institute of International Affairs in Britain defines the Middle East as comprising Iran, Turkey, the Arabian Peninsula, the Fertile Crescent, Sudan, and Cyprus.[86]

That institute takes the credit for undertaking the most important studies of the behavior of the Western colonial states in the Middle East in the 1930s. These include a study that covers the period from 1800 up till the date of the study, and was part of an academic plan to study Islamic history. The importance of this preoccupation lies in its leading to the consolidation of a new system of knowledge called Area Studies in

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[84] Said, p. 130.

[85] We are concentrating on the Middle East on the view that it is a geographical entity from the strategic perspective of the Western powers led by the United States, and on the view that its combines states in the continents of Asia and Africa. It is an exceptional regional order that is the pivot of Area Studies in the Anglo-American world.

[86] Mansur, p. 41.

Britain. To begin with, Area Studies were interested in defined subjects distributed around studies on kinship, Bedouins, industrialization, trade movement, cities, the army, administration, religion, culture, art, slavery, and religious minorities in the Islamic world. Hamilton Gibb played an important role in establishing these studies.[87]

In the post-World War II period, these studies were reinforced by others in economic and historical fields no less important than those that preceded them. These studies were undertaken by British researchers with Arab roots such as Albert Hourani[88] and Charles Issawi, the latter having undertaken an important study on the economic evolution of the Middle East in the period 1815-1914 in both the public and private sectors. In this study he diagnosed the economic sickness that, in his view, was not due to colonialism but to the conflicting forces present before and after colonialism, since the hegemony of the foreign economy led to the growth of feelings of disillusionment in the region. Population growth was also a factor, while oil discoveries and massive amounts of foreign aid did not lessen the intensity of the economic crises in the Middle East.[89]

Tim Niblock divides British academic studies on the Middle East into two phases. The first extends from the 1950s to the 1970s and is divided into general studies distinguished by the sway of a historical vision and variation in the analytical abilities of the researchers. Important studies from this period are those of Holt on the modern history of Sudan, Mansfield on Nasser's Egypt,[90] and Patrick Seale on the struggle for Syria, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East*, which appeared in Arabic in a hefty 842 pages.[91] This phase also included specialist studies that brought together academics in modern history, geography, and anthropology. Researchers at Oxford

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[87] Timothy Mitchell, *The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science* (Gaga Books, Berkeley, 2003), p. 4.

[88] Ibid., p. 5.

[89] Charles Issawi and others, "Middle East Economic Development" in: Albert Hourani, Philip Khoury and Mary Wilson eds, *The Modern Middle East*, translated by As'ad Saqr, 4 vols (Damascus: Dar Tallas, 1996), vol 2: *Transformations in Society and Economy 1789-1918*, p. 32.

[90] Shaheen, "The Middle East in the Vision of the Western Academy," p. 120-1.

[91] Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East*, 10th edn. (Beirut: All Prints Distributors and Publishers, 2007).

formed the nucleus of these studies which were distinguished by their limited value given the absence of an intellectual vision with a comprehensive orientation. These studies did not help the understanding of economic, political, and social aspects of the Middle East. The second phase extends from the mid-1970s and is characterized by an integrated multidisciplinary approach. There was a focus on political economy, the position of the state, ideology, and social forms, with the position of the state being pivotal to these studies.

There were four main directions in this field that dealt with the general theory of political economy in the Middle East: studies of the states of the Middle East, studies of the role of class and groups and their internal and external economic interactions, studies of the bureaucracy and its role in state and society, and studies of the economy and pressure groups. Other studies appeared that looked at sources of wealth and forms of social organization.[92]

In 1958, James Pearson oversaw the preparation of a work called the *Index Islamicus* under the auspices of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. This work is still being updated today by the Islamic bibliography unit at Cambridge University Library under the supervision of Dr Geoffrey Roper assisted by Heather Bleaney. The latest edition on CD contains 202,051 entries of monographs, books, and papers presented to conferences or seminars in the period 1906 to 1997. The main subject of this material relates to the interest of the Western countries in the Arab Mashreq.[93] The following table shows the linguistic distribution of intellectual production on the Middle East, with English at the fore.[94]

Language		**English**	**French**	**German**	**Russian**	**Spanish**	**Italian**	**Total**
Jordan	**No.**	199	20	20	1	0	5	245
	%	81.2	8.2	8.2	0.4	0	2	99.9

[92] Shaheen, "The Middle East in the Vision of the Western Academy," p. 121-2.

[93] Hashim Farhat, *The Middle East States in Foreign Intellectual Production (A Bibliometric Study)* (Riyadh: King Saud University, Library and Information Science Department, [n. d.]), pp. 3-4.

[94] Ibid., p. 17.

Iran	**No.**	281	105	70	64	1	2	523
	%	53.7	20.1	13.4	12.2	0.2	0.4	100
Turkey	**No.**	293	107	116	61	2	21	600
	%	48.8	17.8	19.3	10.2	0.3	3.5	99.9
The Gulf	**No.**	277	21	23	7	1	11	340
	%	81.5	6.2	6.8	2.1	0.3	3.2	99.9
Syria	**No.**	145	111	36	4	2	3	301
	%	48.2	36.9	12.0	1.3	0.7	1.0	99.9
Iraq	**No.**	210	52	35	5	2	0	304
	%	69.1	17.1	11.5	1.6	0.7	0	99.9
Palestine	**No.**	252	37	47	0	3	3	342
	%	73.7	10.8	13.7	0	0.9	0.9	99.9
Lebanon	**No.**	119	113	7	3	2	7	251
	%	47.4	45	2.8	1.2	0.8	2.8	100
Egypt	**No.**	269	274	40	6	5	6	600
	%	44.8	45.7	6.7	1	0.8	1	100
Total	**No.**	2045	840	384	151	18	58	3506
	%	58.33	23.96	11.24	3.31	0.51	1.7	99.9
Overall		60.95	23.10	10.47	3.34	0.52	1.65	_

The table shows that the highest proportion of intellectual production is in English at 58 percent, a figure far greater than for any other language included. This reflects the academic importance assigned by Britain, and the United States subsequently, to the states of the Middle East. Oxford University (founded in England in 1167) teaches these

subjects at the School of Oriental Studies and the Center for Middle East Studies. It grants an undergraduate degree in the subject and at the postgraduate level it teaches Oriental Studies and in the twentieth century Middle Eastern Studies. The university has a special center for Middle Eastern Studies established by the British orientalist Arthur Arberry in 1920. It is based in the School of Oriental and African Studies which has a rich library of periodicals, books, official reports, audio-visual materials, and newspapers and magazines relating to topics in the Orient. In addition to all of that there is a huge archive of documents and photographs acquired by Bertram Thomas during his travels in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1930s. The Oxford University syllabus contain important courses such as Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, South Asian Studies, the Modern Middle East, the political history of the Middle East, study of prominent figures in modern politics, the Middle East and North Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the literature of the Middle East, and Ottoman history.[95]

Leading Area Studies' professors from Britain included Fred Halliday, who was professor of international relations at the London School of Economics and known for his work in Area Studies in general and the Middle East in particular. He had a reputation for methodological clarity and was mindful of the academic usefulness of the social and human sciences. He started from normative analytical principles, and as much as these were specific, he refused to apply them blindly to the societies under study.[96] Among Halliday's important studies are: *Arabia without Sultans* (1974), *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (1978), *Revolution and Foreign Policy: the Case of South Yemen 1967 1987* (1990),[97] and his important book that appeared in Arabic under the title *The Political Conflict in the Arabian Peninsula* in 2002.

As for the American experience, before World War II most American universities were not concerned with the study of a specific region, as was also the case for many Orientalists who were not interested in studying modern developments in the Middle East. The interest in regions and their study in the United States after World War II

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[95] Mohammed Waqie-Allah Ahmed, *Islam in Modern Western Curricula: A Review and Critique* (Medina: Publications of the International Naif bin Abdulaziz al Saud Prize for the Prophet's Sunnah and Contemporary Islamic Studies, 2006), pp. 234-9.

[96] Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East*, translated by Mohammed Mustajir (Cairo: Madbouli, 1997), p. 223-4.

[97] Ibid., p. 5.

derives from the context of the academic developments that accompanied the events of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Physicists concerned with developing the atomic bomb and scholars of international relations were the academics most affected by these events. It should also be remembered that the hostility with Japan and the Soviet Union made specialists in Japanese and Russia literature specialists in the regions of the enemy. The same thing applies to researchers on North Africa and the Middle East who became experts in regional arrangements and battlefields.[98]

In this fashion, Area Studies took off in the United States in the shadow of World War II and evolved in the shadow of the Cold War, specifically when the United States started to behave as a global superpower with webs of interest all over the world. Area Studies conceived of itself as a new way of organizing academic research. Researchers in this field thought that rather than drawing strict lines between their fields, they needed to adopt approaches that brought their fields together with regard to a specific region and to produce useful knowledge in connection with politics. This new field concentrated on the social sciences rather than traditional Orientalism which viewed the societies and cultures under study as changeless structures.[99]

The Social Science Research Council had a major role in consolidating these studies when the Area Studies Committee was set up in 1946 with the aim of defining the most important foreign regions for the United States so as to study them academically in American universities from the perspective of the social sciences. This committee developed to encompass all the human sciences after it received funding from the Ford Foundation. Hamilton Gibb was a member.[100] Subsequently, American universities rushed to encourage these studies and expand Middle East Studies centers at the universities of Colombia, Princeton, and Harvard, which added academics with Arab backgrounds, such as the Lebanese historian Philip Hitti who founded the Middle Eastern Studies program at Princeton[101] where he remained until his retirement in

[98] Lockman, pp. 206-7.

[99] Ibid., p. 209.

[100] Ibid., p. 210.

[101] Ibid., p. 213.

1954.[102] Hitti undertook study of subjects related to the Arab world with the support of the Arabic Islamic Committee of the American Council for Social Studies,[103] and was also known for his work on Arab history.[104]

In the period between the 1950s and 1960s, Middle East studies advanced thanks to the interest of an elite of teachers and students in maintaining US authority in the region and also to the plethora of programs and institutions receiving support from endowments, initially, and then the federal government. At the end of the 1960s, the field witnessed an enormous increase in the number of doctoral degrees awarded in Middle Eastern Studies in all its important branches in political science and anthropology. These studies in the United States had some flaws, most importantly their ongoing lack of an umbrella association. This was resolved, however, in 1946 with the opening of the Middle East Institute in Washington. It started a periodical the *Middle East Journal* which was interested in modern politics and international relations, particularly in light of the growing U.S. interest in the region, as indicated above. However, it did not rely on academic research as might be understood from Area Studies. The American Association for Area Studies was founded in the 1950s and then stopped its activities in the 1960s. It was succeeded by the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) in 1966, which was funded by the Ford Foundation. MESA held its inaugural conference in 1967 and launched its periodical the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. MESA soon expanded to become the biggest organization in the Middle East branch of Area Studies.[105]

As indicated above, the main credit for the development of Area Studies goes to the events experienced by the region as well as intellectual interests. American researchers [at an earlier period] were interested in Biblical and Semitic Studies. The only academic in touch with the Middle East was Egyptologist James Henry Breasted, who in 1919 set

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[102] Shawki Abu Khalil*, The Objectivity of Philip Hitti Even in His Expansive History of the Arabs* (Damascus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1985), p. 14.

[103] Mitchell, p. 3.

[104] Philip Hitti, Edward Jurji and Gibrael Jabbour, *History of the Arabs (Expanded)*, 3 vols. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kashshaf, 1949-1953) is intended.

[105] Lockman, pp. 214 and 216.

up the Oriental Institute of Chicago.[106] The American school of Area Studies was fed by the immigration of leading European Orientalists to America such as Gibb from Britain, Von Grunebaum from Austria, and Franz Rosenthal from Germany in the period after World War II. The field became professionalized, however, after the foundation of the Middle East Studies Association as indicated above.[107]

This experience went through four stages that were influenced by theories in the political sciences and the concerns and strategic goals of US policy that were basically oriented towards the containment of the Soviet advance, ensuring the oil supply, and the security of Israel and preservation of the regimes friendly to it. This strategy affected Area Studies in America. The four stages are as follows:[108]

Stage 1: this extended from the early 1950s till the end of the 1960s. It was interested in subjects related to modernity, democracy, and liberalism, in an effort to understand the nature of the societies of Third World states and the factors influencing the political process. This was in order to persuade the newly independent states to adopt the theory of modernity as an alternative to Marxism. This period was marked by cultural interpretations in place of analyses, which makes clear the influence of the Orientalist heritage over Area Studies, although it saw in the military class the chance for political enlightenment.[109]

Stage 2: This began in the 1970s and continued until the early 1980s. It was interested in the issue of political participation, and research affected by events in the region such as the Iranian revolution, the assassination of Sadat who intended to expel Soviet experts, and the Israeli occupation of Lebanon. These events revealed the errors in the theory of modernity and turned attention to the understanding of political Islam and its interpretation politically, psychologically, culturally, socially, and economically. This period was marked by journalistic analyses in the context of what Anderson termed "watching the mullahs."[110]

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[106] Mitchell, p. 3.

[107] Ibid., pp. 6-10.

[108] Shaheen, "The Middle East in the Vision of the Western Academy," p. 124.

[109] Ibid., p. 125.

[110] Ibid., p. 126-7.

Stage 3: This ran from the 1980s to the 1990s and was distinguished by a return to the study of the state and its relationship with civil society, the manner in which public policy was created, and the role of the state as regulator of the process of economic, political, and social transformation in society. Among such studies are Giacomo Luciani's *Nation, State and Integration in the Arab World* in four volumes, Fuad Khuri's *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, Elia Zureik's *Theoretical Considerations for the Sociology of the Arab States*, and Gabriel Ben Dor's *The State in Adopting Policy of Economic Openness*. All these works, however, lacked comparative studies between the economic and political systems in the region.[111]

Stage 4: This began in the 1990s when Area Studies once again took up subjects related to civil society, democracy, and liberalism. It tried to revive hope in progress toward democracy and creating balance between state power and social forces. These studies include the results put forward by Richard Norton on civil society in the Middle East in two volumes, and Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble on political liberalization and democratization in the Arab world. These studies failed to understand the nature of power and society in these states, given the vagueness of the concepts and terms used and the lack of definitions for democracy and political participation and the relationship between them in Middle Eastern societies.[112]

Perhaps the special feature of Area Studies as it crystallized in the United States is its intense reliance on institutional research and not individual efforts, as is the case in the Arab world. Institutional research that is officially supported and linked to the public policy of the state—especially foreign policy—has made the number of regional research institutions reach 4,015 according to Brookings Institution statistics.[113] The importance of these institutes lies in the reports and research they supply to policy makers. The strategies for intervention in the Middle East, such as the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, were to be found on the shelves of these institutes and centers years before their implementation.[114]

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[111] Ibid., p. 127-8.

[112] Ibid., p. 128-9.

[113] Mosdek, *Wikileaks*, p. 140.

[114] Ibid., p. 132.

The best known such Area Studies institutions in the United States are: the Brookings Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research founded in 1942, the Hoover Institution for War Studies founded in 1919, the Cato Institute founded in 1977, the Carnegie Endowment, the Nixon Center founded in 1994, the Woodrow Wilson Research Center founded in 1968, the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies founded in 1962, the Hudson Institute founded in 1961, and the Institute for Policy Studies founded in 1963.

To this list should be added the Institute for Future Policy, the Institute for Global Policy, the Naval Research Center, the Institute for Defense Analyses, the Rand Corporation, and others.[115]

Since the 1990s, such studies began to steadily increase in the major institutes and centers. In this respect, Anne Betteridge, former executive director of the Middle East Studies Association of North America points out that the proportion of studies on the Middle East region increased for academics specializing in religion by about 8 percent after 1996.[116] Nevertheless, this effort was not free of criticism on the basis of the continuation of the Orientalist past in the knowledge production of these institutions. This criticism was particularly on the part of Arab researchers and critics, who accuse all these researchers of having close links with US national security policy. Examples are Nadav Safran, an expert in the Israeli army and professor at Harvard, Leonard Binder, professor at the University of Chicago and member of the CIA, as well as Carleton Coon and Hallburn, both linked to the CIA, MESA, and American universities concerned with Area Studies, on the political level in the first place. These incidents came among other criticisms directed at the entire field, from its Orientalist roots to its current academic manifestation.[117]

Ultimately, Area Studies was born in the United States as an extension of the transformations undergone by the following three arenas: the crisis-riddled field of Orientalism, the transformations in American strategic thinking and strategy, and the academic life of the social sciences. The contact between the results in these three

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[115] For more see ibid., p. 142-66.

[116] Bronwyn Wheeler, Academic Seminar on the Incorporation of Islamic Studies into the Curriculum in Philosphy and the Humanities, March 6-7, 1998, *Islamiyat al-Marifa*, year 4, no. 14 (Fall 1998), pp. 233-4.

[117] Mitchell, p. 11.

arenas gave birth to a distinct academic field that adhered to the policies towards a specific region of the state that had incubated it. Area Studies has expanded to include African, Asian, European, and even American studies in other countries. It has also expanded to include academics from other countries, which would be the topic for another paper.

Conclusion

Nations do not become powerful or make a mark on history unless they have internalized the equation linking knowledge and power.[118]Only the coming together of those two elements ensures that a nation becomes powerful. The West has learnt that lesson after having lived for centuries in a position of weakness before an Orient that had swept geography before it, and had it by the throat. For this reason, from the eleventh century onwards the West has tried to understand this world that rivalled it in its lands, seeking to know its secrets, languages, history, and religions. It asked how it had been able to take off from the tents of the Arabian peninsula with a religious call and reach them with armies.

The result was that history ran in two contrary directions: one where the civilization of the East reached its pinnacle and began to decline, and another where Western Europe founded its renaissance on the knowledge of the other and the self and struck back. In a clash many have called a clash of civilizations and a clash of destruction between two cultures they tried to cover in geographical imaginings that never existed. If the Middle East and its synonyms are just inventions for specific purposes that became current and unavoidable, it can be confidently stated that concepts such as East and West, North and South, are also unavoidable inventions since they have been imposed on us by the centrality of Europe in the past and the fact that people had to take a position in space and time on the basis of which they represented the world.

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[118] With regard to this problem, many have commented on the view of Edward Said himself that Orientalism as a discourse was linked with power and generated a discourse by uniting knowledge with power. The comment relates to the fact that Orientalism appeared in countries whose states were not colonialist or did not have colonial interests in the East. Said responded to this remark and others in his short work *Comments on Orientalism*. My own opinion on the matter is that it is related to a context that forced the phenomenon to spread beyond its causes in a way that was not only linked to the emergence of Orientalism in non-colonialist countries, but the model of Orientalist thought extended to the countries of the East themselves, which is also the topic for another monograph.

It might therefore be necessary to conclude this paper in a reflective manner and reconsider its philosophical essence and the link between the parts of the main issue that falls within its scope. That is the issue of the eternal relationship between power and knowledge, for were it not for the dialectical relationship between Anglo-American Orientalist knowledge and the policies of Britain and the United States in the Orient, in that politics directs knowledge and knowledge serves politics, then there would be no such thing as Area Studies. On the procedural level, the birth of practical strategic thought formed the link between the two elements of the equation. This thought produced a sub-regional order within the overall international order which facilitated the work of Orientalists and laid the ground for them to set up research centers, think tanks and academic departments in complete harmony with the strategies that laid down the concepts shared by stakeholders and professional politicians.

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