

THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE PAST AND FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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The founding of the Middle East Institute in Washington D.C. in May 1946 seems a convenient event to mark the arrival of Middle Eastern area studies in the United States. In January 1947 the Institute launched *The Middle East Journal*, the first American quarterly devoted to the contemporary Middle East. The journal's inaugural issue declared that the region was now "very near" the United States, both in point of time-distance and with respect to the United States' new involvement there in "questions of power politics." Yet the Middle East remained to all except a very few Americans "essentially *terra incognita*."¹ The principal purpose of the journal was not to analyze the attitudes and policies of the Western powers, which had shaped the countries of the region in the past. Its aim was to set forth and evaluate the forces shaping the region today, namely "forces and factors engendered in and among these countries themselves -- their national consciousness, urge for economic self-determination, cultural conditions, population pressures, regional understandings."² Since these countries shared a common Islamic heritage and experience of European expansionism, moreover, a proper understanding of one country could be acquired "only through a proper knowledge of all." The journal would therefore present particular conditions and problems in the Middle East "as facets of the whole."³

Fifty years later, in 1996, the Institute assessed the success of this ambition with an article in the journal entitled "The Study of Middle East Politics 1946-1996: A Stocktaking."⁴ The assessment was not a positive one. Its author, James Bill, a senior academic in the field, concluded that "we have learned disturbingly little after fifty years of heavy exertion." He gave a list of major political developments in the region that scholars had failed to interpret or foresee, and devoted the rest of the article to listing possible reasons for these failures.

Such acknowledgments of failure have been a regular feature of Middle Eastern area studies. Almost a quarter of a century earlier, in August 1973, the Research and Training Committee of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) convened a conference in Palo Alto, funded by the Ford Foundation, to assess the state of the field. In his introduction to the subsequent volume of conference papers, Leonard Binder stated: "The fact is that Middle East studies are beset by subjective projections, displacements of affect, ideological distortion, romantic mystification, and religious bias, as well as by a great deal of incompetent scholarship."⁵ Twelve years earlier, in another essay on the state of Middle Eastern studies, Manfred Halpern complained that despite the great expansion of the field over the preceding decade, "we have been devoting ourselves to a kind of stamp collecting," filling in pieces of information, country by country, but "neglecting to identify essential structures and relationships or to essay preliminary syntheses." Given the present situation in the region, he said, "[i]t may even be that we are losing ground."⁶

These regular statements of failure have always shared another feature: their optimism that the field has turned a corner and that the failures they diagnose belong to the past. "The new Orientalist" emerging from of the combination of area studies and the social sciences, Halpern predicted in 1962, would produce "a sense of the whole" that was lost in the division of labor among the disciplines. Despite the distortions and incompetence of their youth, said Binder hopefully in 1974, "Middle East studies have come of age." The book he was introducing on the

state of the field, he suggested, “marks the rites of passage.” Although the field’s record of achievements was undistinguished, wrote Bill in 1995, “the future seems brighter, partly because of the increasing recognition of the problems of the past.”⁷

Given this pattern, there seems no point in writing yet another assessment of the state of the field. It would not be difficult to reproduce the pattern, equally pessimistic about past accomplishments, equally optimistic about the appearance of a new dawn. Instead, I want to pose two related questions. First, what structures and possibilities of knowledge shape the field of Middle Eastern area studies, in ways that make the Middle East seem knowable and yet not? What intellectual strategies make it possible to see the Middle East “as a whole” yet render the resulting pictures so disappointing? More specifically, how has the changing relationship between the local expertise of area studies and the general questions asked by social science disciplines governed the forms of knowledge? Second, by way of introduction to these first questions, how should we understand the relationship between the “questions of power politics” that make the Middle East seem so near and the production of this academic knowledge? The organizers of post-war area studies in the United States almost always invoked the expansion of U.S. power in World War II and in the Cold War crises that ensued. Calls for the dismantling or remodeling of area studies in the 1990s also referred to the passing of the Cold War as signaling the end of area studies’ usefulness.⁸ Yet if area studies never produced much in the way of useful knowledge, how exactly did it serve the needs of the expansion of U.S. power? The fact that both defenders and critics of area studies always tell us that it did so is not in itself evidence of a direct relationship between the construction of knowledge and the exercise of power.

The genealogy of area studies must be understood in relation to the wider structuring of academic knowledge and to the struggles not of the Cold War but of science -- and social science in particular -- as a twentieth-century political project. This project has been closely connected with structuring the global power of the United States, but the relationship is not the simple one that is often assumed in discussions of area studies. The social sciences took their modern form in the same period as area studies and were themselves created as a kind of area study. The development of the two kinds of study was interrelated and so were their subsequent difficulties. The so-called crisis of area studies over the last quarter of the twentieth century was also a crisis in the project of creating a general science of society. The question of the future of area studies is therefore a question about the future of the social science project rather than simply an issue of how best to learn about foreign parts.

Pre-War Area Studies

World War II and the ensuing crises of the Cold War did not give birth to area studies. One could argue on the contrary, as Robert Hall argued in 1947 and Vicente Rafael recently proposed again, that they may have postponed its development.⁹ The conventional story is that area studies developed thanks to the passing of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, in response to the Sputnik crisis and the escalation of the Cold War. Yet as Barbara Clowse has shown, the NDEA was related more to domestic political battles than Cold War agendas. The significance of Sputnik and its attendant hysteria “was not that it produced initial interest in such bills but that it disarmed opposition to federal aid.”¹⁰ The opposition reflected two domestic

concerns: the possibility that unrestricted federal aid to states might be used for sectarian schools and breach the first-amendment separation of church and state; and the fear that following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, federal aid would be used to enforce the racial integration of schools.¹¹ These domestic battles delayed the funding of area studies programs in the United States, setting back developments that were already under way. The focus on the NDEA also obscures the role of the foundations, especially Ford and Rockefeller, which dates back to the 1930s and was of larger significance.¹²

The concerns of area studies first emerged, at least in the Middle East case, in the inter war period, and were related to developments that were simultaneously political and intellectual. As Edward Said argues, the period between the wars was characterized by a civilizational anxiety, especially in Europe, which turned in response to the study of oriental civilizations. Borrowing new ideas of total humanistic knowledge fostered by classical studies and histories of civilizations, scholars began to see in the idea of another civilization a way of exploring the contemporary challenges to the self-assurance of the West -- "to the West's spirit, knowledge, and imperium."¹³ In the United States, where oriental studies had begun to develop out of Biblical studies and Semitic philology, the new approach to oriental civilization was pioneered by the Egyptologist James Henry Breasted.¹⁴ In 1919 Breasted founded the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, with funding from John Rockefeller, Jr. and the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board. Breasted's vision for the development of oriental studies in America was to transform it from a philological into a historical discipline "in which art, archaeology, political science, language, literature and sociology, in short all the categories of civilization shall be represented and correlated."¹⁵

The study of ancient "civilization" gave the field of oriental studies a broader base than its earlier formation in Bible studies. Yet the strength of the new Oriental civilization programs, typically associated with university museums, overseas archaeological missions, and the support of private benefactors, all focused on the ancient Near East, may have impeded the growth of another form of Near Eastern studies -- the study of Islamic civilization. It is probably no accident that the first program to integrate the history and languages of the Islamic Near East in the United States was set up not at one of the universities with a broad commitment to the ancient Near East, such as Chicago, Columbia, Pennsylvania, or Yale, but at Princeton, where traditional Bible studies remained strong and comparative Semitics and archaeology were neglected. Princeton also had close personal connections to the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, founded by American missionaries but by this point secularized and known as the American University of Beirut (AUB).¹⁶ In 1927 Princeton established a Department of Oriental Languages and Literatures and brought the Lebanese historian Philip Hitti (1886-1979) from AUB as assistant professor of Semitics. "Unhampered by tradition," as he later wrote, Hitti turned the new department into the country's first program specializing in Arabic and Islamic studies. He also organized an interdepartmental Committee on Near Eastern Studies, which held three summer programs, in 1935, 1938, and 1941, sponsored by the Arabic-Islamic Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies. These offered courses on the languages, history, and culture of the Islamic Near East, intended for "historians, medievalists, Byzantinists, historians of fine arts, archaeology, and science, students of philosophy and religion and others who have become convinced of the necessity of acquiring some competence in the Arabic-Islamic phases of their respective disciplines."¹⁷ After the wartime interruption, in 1947 the

committee was institutionalized as the interdepartmental Program in Near Eastern Studies, the first U.S. area studies program devoted to region.¹⁸

These pre-war developments in the U.S., however, should not be separated from the more influential intellectual changes taking place in cities like Beirut itself, where Hitti taught from 1908, Cairo, Tangier, and Istanbul, and related developments in Europe. In Beirut, there was a great expansion of research at AUB on the contemporary region in this period.¹⁹ In Tangier, the Mission Scientifique au Maroc was established by the French in 1904 and began publishing the *Revue du Monde Musulman* in 1906. In Cairo, the Société d'Economie Politique was created in 1909, and began publishing research on contemporary Egypt in its review *L'Egypte Contemporaine*; and at same time the government set up a national statistics office and began to publish a statistical annual. Related developments occurred in Turkey, where the new republic established in 1923 began the publication of a statistical annual.²⁰

In London, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in the 1930s commissioned a comprehensive survey of the Western impact upon the Arab world and Turkey since 1800. The authors drew up a plan for “an organic study of the life of the Moslem societies, and the force, ideals, and tendencies at work within them.”²¹ This plan of research and publication was a blueprint for the development of what would come to be called area studies. The overall project of “the tracing of social evolution and the bearing of this process upon present conditions” -- or what would later be termed “modernization” -- was divided horizontally into three time periods, reflecting the assumption that the region’s history should be written in terms of its relation to the West: (i) a survey of the social institutions of Islamic society in the eighteenth century, “prior to the introduction of western influences;” (ii) an examination of the Western impact since 1800; and (iii) an investigation of present-day “conditions and forces in play.”²²

The research program further proposed twelve “vertical divisions” to break the field into manageable components, while stressing in the language of British social anthropology that “the interrelations of the various social functions” made rigid boundaries impossible. The vertical components were: the family, the village (including nomads), industry, commerce, the city, the army, government and administration, religion, education, law, slavery, and non-Muslim minorities.²³ The authors, H.A.R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, hoped eventually to produce a “synthetic study of the problems [of social evolution] as a whole, under such general heads as rationalization and the release of individuality,” but pointed out that this would “occupy a whole staff of research workers for many years.”²⁴ By 1939 they had managed to complete and send to press the first part of volume one on the eighteenth century. The outbreak of war, however, that supposed midwife of area studies, postponed its publication until 1950. The second part of volume one was delayed even further, until 1957, and the remainder of the project was abandoned.²⁵

In 1950, the Royal Institute of International Affairs launched a successor project with the publication of *The Middle East: A Political and Economic Survey*. More importantly, however, Gibb and Bowen’s program shaped the development of Middle Eastern studies in the U.S., including the work sponsored by the SSRC over two decades. In June 1942, Gibb traveled to the University of Chicago to speak at a conference on “The Near East: Problems and Prospects,” attended by a mix of scholars of the ancient and modern Near East, foreign policy and state department officials, and representatives of corporate interests.²⁶ Ten years later, in October 1952, a series of papers were presented at a conference at Princeton University, “The Near East:

Social Dynamics and the Cultural Setting,” sponsored by the newly formed Committee on the Near and Middle East of the SSRC. The titles of the papers read like the table of contents of Gibb and Bowen’s study: “the nomads,” “the villager,” “the industrial worker,” “the bazaar merchant,” “the entrepreneur class,” “economic planners,” “the army officer,” “the clergy,” “intellectuals in the modern development of the Islamic world,” and “minorities in the political process.”²⁷ The SSRC subsequently sponsored conferences and working groups on topics that began to fill in the Gibb and Bowen framework, including a meeting on Minorities in the Middle East and another (at Berkeley in 1966) on Middle Eastern Cities.²⁸

Prewar proposals for an “organic” and “synthetic” study of the social evolution of the contemporary Middle East could draw upon a new generation of scholarship on the region. Besides the work conducted at research institutes in Cairo, Beirut, and other cities of the region mentioned above, a group of European sociologists and ethnographers was beginning to publish historical-ethnographic studies of the twentieth-century Arab world. These included Edmond Doutté (1867-1926), *Magie et Religion dans l’Afrique du Nord* (1908), Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957), *En Algerie* (1914), Robert Montagne (1893-1954), *La vie sociale et la vie politique du Berberes* (1931), Edward Westermarck (1862-1939), *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (1926), Winifred Blackman, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt* (1927), Hilma Granqvist (1890-1972), *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village* (two volumes, 1931 and 1935), the early writings of Jacques Berque (1910-1995), and the work on the Sudan by the anthropologist Evans-Pritchard (1902-73), who taught at the Egyptian University in the 1920s.²⁹ In addition, by the end of the war a number of important economic and political-historical studies began to appear in Britain, mostly by scholars of Arab background, including Albert Hourani, George Antonius, and Charles Issawi.³⁰

To this new body of literature, Orientalists such as Gibb and Bowen brought from Oriental Studies the idea that the Islamic world formed a cultural unity, based upon a common cultural core that only the Orientalist was equipped to decipher. As Gibb later argued in justifying the role of the Orientalist in area studies programs, his function “is to provide that core out of his knowledge and understanding of the invisibles... to explain the why, rather than the what and the how, and this precisely because he is or should be able to see the data not simply as isolated facts, explicable in and by themselves, but in the broad context and long perspective of cultural habit and tradition.”³¹ It is important to note that this scheme of “organic” knowledge of the Middle East as an interrelated whole did not seem, in the 1930s, to pose a problem of the relationship between area studies and the social science disciplines. The elaborate plan of vertical and horizontal divisions of the subject matter were based on a “natural principle” of demarcation according to occupational groups (the village, industry, commerce, the army, religion, and so on, all the way up to government and administration, conceived simply as another occupation). There was no separate analysis of “the state,” nor of a distinct sphere called “the economy.” Correspondingly, there was no theoretical or practical problem of how to relate this analysis to the distinct disciplinary domains of economics, political science, and sociology. At Oxford, where Gibb taught, these disciplines were not yet organized as separate faculties.

The Other Area Studies

When World War II shifted the center of gravity of academic research to the United States, two

factors set back the development of Middle Eastern area studies. First, there was a rupture with the centers of research in the Arab world and the colonial ethnographers and other scholars who moved between Europe and the Middle East. The United States had no comparable scholarly base. Although wartime funds had supported crash programs in Middle Eastern languages at several U.S. universities, and individual scholars had been introduced to the Middle East through wartime service, in particular military or State Department intelligence work, it took two decades before Ford Foundation funding had produced a sizeable body of university specialists. In 1949, no American academic employed full time at any university could claim to be an expert in the economics, sociology or politics of the modern Middle East, according to an ACLS report, and only one American anthropologist was known to be conducting research on the area.³² Historians were almost as scarce.³³

Meanwhile, senior Orientalists had to be brought from Europe to lead the new Middle East programs and this too took time. Gibb moved from Oxford to head the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard in the mid 1950s; Gustav von Grunebaum, an earlier refugee from Vienna, moved from Chicago to head the center at UCLA; in 1956 Yale hired Franz Rosenthal, a German orientalist who had reached the U.S. in 1940; and in 1952 Berkeley appointed George Lenczowski, a French-trained Polish exile who had arrived in the U.S. in 1945.³⁴

The second cause of delay was that, in contrast to the situation in prewar Europe, in the United States universities were already clearly divided into separate social science departments. The European practice of turning those trained in Oriental Studies into authorities on the modern period could not produce scholarship that qualified in the United States as social science.³⁵ Social scientists, on the other hand, had no training in Middle Eastern languages or history. The most influential work of social science on the region, Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society*, published a decade after the ACLS report in 1958, was produced by a scholar with no background in the study of the Middle East and no knowledge of its languages.³⁶

However, while the division of the American academy into discrete professional disciplines impeded the study of the region, paradoxically it was also an important impetus to the development of the distinctively American phenomenon of area studies. This division of labor could trace its origins back as far as the turn of the century. But in the years either side of World War II it had taken on a new significance. In earlier decades what distinguished the disciplines was the different kinds of social questions they addressed. Economists were concerned with prices, markets, and business cycles; political scientists with public law, legislatures, and the behavior of parties and voters; and sociologists with the social problems arising from industrialization and the growth of cities. In a process beginning in the 1930s and completed by the 1950s, the social sciences transformed themselves into, as it were, a kind of area studies. Each invented an object that marked the exclusive territory of the discipline and defined its boundary with others.

The clearest example of this was provided by Economics, which from the late 1930s invented the term "the economy" as the object of its knowledge, a concept that was in general use only by the 1950s.³⁷ Political Science tried to do something similar by reworking the old idea of the state, but in the late 1940s and 1950s abandoned the state in favor of the more inclusive and scientific idea of "the political system."³⁸ In Sociology there was a corresponding shift from the study of discrete social problems and processes to the analysis of society as a whole, or in the more elaborate Parsonian formulation, the social system. The change in Anthropology gathered

momentum in same period, with Franz Boas, Ruth Benedict, Clyde Kluckhohn, A.L. Kroeber and others reorienting the discipline in the United States around a new definition of the term “culture,” meaning the whole way of life of a particular country or people.³⁹ The word “area” was actually used at the time to refer to these newly mapped theoretical territories.⁴⁰

These changes can be related to the professionalization of the social sciences in the middle third of the twentieth century, including the claims to scientific authority that could be built upon exclusive territorial control of new theoretical objects.⁴¹ But they also registered and contributed to a broader political and intellectual change: what I would call the nationalization of social knowledge. Histories of nationalism focus on its origins in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe, and more recently on its colonial origins.⁴² Yet it is easy to forget that the term “nationalism” came into common use only in the twentieth century, and that only in the interwar period did official and academic knowledge begin to picture the world as a series of nation states. With the growing strength of anti-imperialist movements in the colonial world, the collapsing of European empires, and the development by the United States of more effective forms of imperialism -- in Central America and the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Persian Gulf -- based upon nominally sovereign local regimes, the globe came to be seen no longer as a network of empires but as a system of presumptively equivalent nation-states. Each geographical unit was imagined, in turn, to possess an economy, portrayed in terms of the novel statistical trope entitled national income; a self-contained political system or state; an homogenous body called society; and even a distinctive national culture. Each unit was also given a national history.

As professional, political, and academic knowledge came to see the world as a series of nation states, it also came to imagine it to consist of a series of discrete national economies, societies, cultures, and histories. The objects that now defined the intellectual territory of the social sciences had borders that coincided with those of the nation state. In the same decades as the world-encircling networks of commodities, wealth, and power came to be represented in the simplified form of a universal system of sovereign nation-states, the social science disciplines were reorganized around objects that in each case assumed the structure of the nation-state as their universal social template.

Thus the development of one form of area studies in the United States intersected with another. The attempt to construct “the Middle East” and other regions as distinct territorial objects defining a legitimate field of study crossed paths with the attempt to create “the economy,” “the political system,” “culture,” and “society” as distinct social spaces, each taking the nation state as the its normal location and extension, and each defining the territory of a self-contained discipline.

The intersecting construction of two kinds of area study was the source of much of the importance attributed to area programs in the 1950s and 1960s. In the first place, the division of social analysis into the separate study of the economy, political system, culture and society, which seemed straightforward for the study of the United States and Europe, appeared premature for the study of the backward regions of the non-West. “Only a society that has already achieved a dynamic stability,” wrote Halpern, “can afford to think of politics, economics, or culture as genuinely autonomous realms of existence and not merely convenient divisions for study. In a traditional society . . . or [one] that is entirely in flux, the connection between, say, politics and all other aspects of life is the heart of the issue.” If the old tradition of Oriental Studies was no

longer practical, “then the division of labor among disciplines nonetheless requires a sense of the whole -- so that the common purpose of divided labor is not lost.”⁴³ This sense of the whole was to be provided by a “new kind of Orientology,” Halpern argued, in which area experts trained in the languages, history, and culture of the region would overcome the narrowness of their disciplinary focus.⁴⁴ Area studies was to compensate for the limitations of the new, professionalized social sciences.

Area studies had a second and even greater contribution to make to the development of the social sciences. Only through area studies could social science become universal. There were two ways, it was proposed, in which this contribution would be made. First, area studies would cleanse social theory of its provincialism. At a national conference on the study of world areas held in November 1947, Pendleton Herring of the Carnegie Corporation argued:

Many specialists now interested in the study of areas have been trained in subject matter fields that are very much the product of our own Western culture. This holds particularly for economics, sociology, psychology and political science. The conceptual schemes upon which these disciplines are based are, in large measure, the product of Western thought and institutions . . . Specialists whose training derives from this context are now attempting to apply their methods of analysis to cultures that are very different . . . [I]f there be a provincialism within these disciplines, it will quickly be revealed when the expert applies his formulations to alien cultures.”⁴⁵

Area studies would serve as a testing ground for the universalization of the social sciences. Just as unusual data from other regions was incorporated into the natural sciences, area research was to be incorporated into the social sciences and even the humanities, “to bring comparative and concrete data to bear on generalization and theory.”⁴⁶

Second, with each social science devoted to its own area of social reality, area studies offered the means to overcome the new sense of professional isolation. For some scholars, area studies would provide the means for the social sciences to cross-fertilize one another, while retaining their territorial exclusivity as separate disciplines (something that they would risk losing if the same collaboration occurred in the study of American society). Others hoped to combine the insights of the different disciplines into what Talcott Parsons called a “total structure of scientific knowledge.”⁴⁷ For these scholars, the area studies region could provide a definable whole in which the integration of the disciplines would take place. Area study was analogous to the study of medicine, Parsons suggested, the total human organism corresponding to the totality of human society. Just as the understanding of the practical problems of “the whole man” required collaboration among several sciences -- “anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, bacteriology, and even psychology and some of the social sciences” -- in the same way, the study of an area would provide “a concrete focus for the disciplines of the social sciences and related fields of the humanities and natural sciences.”

Parsons described this integrated development of the disciplines borrowing the new language of the development of underdeveloped regions, including the same vocabulary of strategic importance. In two “comparatively new” disciplines, institutional sociology and social anthropology, the required “level of knowledge and competence is not as yet diffused, even within the professions themselves, to say nothing of diffusion to the proponents of the neighboring disciplines with which they must cooperate in area studies.” Yet these newer fields provided a “fundamental bridge” between the “highly developed” disciplines of economics and

political science on the one side and the developing field of psychology on the other. Sociology and anthropology were therefore “of particularly strategic importance to area studies” and it was necessary to “correct their uneven development.” The geographical limits of an area would require specialists to pool their knowledge, forcing upon them the “teamwork” that would overcome this unevenness. By inducing the cooperation required for the integrated development of a total structure of knowledge, area studies “may have a profound effect on social science research.”⁴⁸

The development of area studies was not simply a reaction to the needs of the Cold War, but integral to the larger attempt to create a sovereign structure of universal knowledge -- itself part of the project of a globalized American modernity to which the Cold War also belonged. It is in this larger context that I would like to place the present problem of area studies. The so-called crisis of area studies since the 1990s is better understood as a crisis in the ability of both kinds of territorial object -- those of area studies and those of the social sciences -- to delimit and legitimate a field of scholarship.

Professionalization and Politics

By 1967 a new generation of senior scholars had established Middle Eastern studies as an organized field of expertise. In December of that year the Middle East Studies Association, founded twelve months earlier by a group of fifty-one men and funded with a five-year grant of \$56,000 from the Ford Foundation, held its first annual meeting in Chicago.⁴⁹ The initiative to establish MESA came from the Near and Middle Committee of the Social Science Research Council, also funded by the Ford Foundation. Morroe Berger, a Princeton sociologist and chair of the SSRC committee, became the association’s first president. The MESA secretariat was housed at NYU, where NDEA funds had recently supported the creation of a Center for Near Eastern Studies. The NYU center joined eight others funded in 1959-61, at Harvard, Michigan, Princeton, John Hopkins, Portland State College, Texas, Utah, and UCLA, and three more established in the course of the 1960s, at Berkeley, Georgetown, and Pennsylvania.

Although many of these centers were still run by scholars trained in Oriental Studies, there was associated with them a growing number of senior social scientists, especially political scientists.⁵⁰ By 1967 there were tenured specialists in Middle Eastern politics at, among others, Harvard, Princeton, Michigan, UCLA, Northwestern, Chicago, Columbia, NYU, and Berkeley. (Thirty years later, there were tenured Middle East politics faculty only at the last three out of that list.) From the mid-1960s, this new generation of tenured, male social scientists began to take over the leadership of U.S. Middle Eastern studies.

If 1967 marked the full institutionalization of the Middle East field, it also marked the surfacing of new problems. In a report written in May 1967 and published in the second issue of the MESA Bulletin in November 1967, on the eve of MESA's inaugural annual meeting, Morroe Berger declared that the Middle East “has been receding in immediate political importance to the U.S. (and even in ‘headline’ or ‘nuisance’ value) relative to Africa, Latin America and the Far East.”⁵¹ As Edward Said has remarked, given the moment at which it was published, just after the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and even at which it was written, in the midst of the crisis leading up to the war, this was an extraordinary statement.⁵² It seems to reflect something more

than shortsightedness, something closer to a denial of the historical situation in which the field found itself, indicating perhaps the threat that this situation represented to the authority of the new area expertise.

As the MESA Board discussed in private, the June 1967 war had caused the cancellation of many research trips, the closing of U.S. embassies across the region, not to mention a shift in the course of the region's history. The MESA meetings held six months later did not discuss the event, however, and in fact the Board acted to prevent its discussion. A certain Mr. Shabatai proposed to present a paper on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the Board asked him "to withdraw his paper due to the sensitivity of his subject," and because, although a graduate student, he was affiliated with a foreign diplomatic service.⁵³ The incident was a symptom of the problems the field was beginning to face.

The authority of Middle Eastern studies was based upon its claim to a scientific status as a detached field of expertise. This claim did not require silence on political topics. Many of these experts wrote about contemporary issues, including those who supported the State of Israel, as a majority of the leading figures in the field did. What they could not easily allow was controversy among themselves, or the airing of "sensitive" issues that might produce such controversy. Controversy would perhaps reveal the precarious nature of their detachment. It would undermine the ability of scholars to speak with a single voice, from a singular position, as the authority of science and professional expertise required. It would challenge what Irene Gendzier and Vincente Rafael have in different ways described as the liberal, managerial style of knowing, with which area studies organized the problems and populations of the non-West and kept them at a safe remove.⁵⁴

As a consequence, Middle Eastern studies tended to avoid the scholarly analysis of Israel and the issue of Palestinian rights. A review of the field in 1962 noted the relative absence of studies of Israel, while an influential *American Political Science Review* article of the same period laying out a framework for the study of the region deliberately excluded the state of Israel (and thus the Palestine question), as did Morroe Berger's *The Arab World Today* (1962).⁵⁵ At the November 1973 MESA annual meeting there was again no formal discussion of the Arab-Israeli war that had just ended.⁵⁶ In his MESA Presidential Address the following year, Leonard Binder of the University of Chicago (an American who had fought in the Israeli army in the 1948-49 Palestine war while a student at Harvard and had begun learning Arabic when taken prisoner of war in Jordan) defended the absence of discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at the professional meetings. The silence was not because scholars had nothing to say, he explained, but was an issue of "what one may appropriately say in this context."⁵⁷

The professionalization of Middle Eastern studies, confirmed by the founding of MESA in 1967, represented an attempt to define this "context" in which scholars could speak as scholars, and to establish what is was appropriate to say. Immediately before MESA's founding, the field's leading scholars had been embarrassed by an incident that raised questions about their academic detachment. In 1964, the journal *Middle Eastern Affairs*, launched in 1950, abruptly ceased publishing after it was discovered and publicized that it was subsidized by political sources.⁵⁸ The journal's editorial advisory board included senior Middle East scholars at Berkeley, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Shortly afterwards, an organization called the American Association for Middle Eastern Studies, established in 1958 with an equally distinguished board of academic advisors, ceased its

activities with the same abruptness, including the publication of the journal *Middle Eastern Studies* (1958-64), after it was accused of having undeclared connections with Zionist organizations.⁵⁹ AAMES published textbooks and ran summer courses to introduce college teachers to the Middle East. The courses were held in the region and divided into two parts, one in an Arab country, either Morocco or Egypt, and the other always in Israel.

The abrupt closure of these journals and associations raised the question of secret funding of Middle Eastern studies, including not only the possible role of Zionist organizations but also the part that may have been played by the United States Central Intelligence Agency.⁶⁰ Only recently has it been understood how widely the CIA influenced the production of academic and intellectual culture around the world in the second half of the twentieth century. The story of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, established by the CIA in Paris, is now well known, including its funding of the British magazine *Encounter*. The CIA's efforts extended well beyond this, to include the funding of art, music, academic and cultural congresses, books, translations, and a wide variety of journals willing to criticize Marxism or the Soviet Union and to support, or at least remain silent on, American violence in Vietnam and other parts of the world.⁶¹ Among the journals the agency funded overseas was an Arab counterpart to *Encounter* magazine, *al-Hiwar*, established in Beirut in the early 1960s under the editorship of a distinguished Palestinian writer, Tawfiq Sayyigh.⁶² *Al-Hiwar* ceased publication in 1967 after the CIA funding of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was revealed.

No adequate research has yet been done on the extent of CIA involvement in Middle Eastern studies in the United States. A later episode involving Nadav Safran is the best known. Safran was Professor of Government at Harvard, where he taught for over thirty years. Like Binder, his counterpart at Chicago, he had served in the Israeli army in the 1948-49 Palestine war. In 1982 he received a grant of \$107,430 from the CIA to carry out research on Saudi Arabia, the payment stipulating that he must keep the source of funds secret and clear the publication of his research with the agency. Although this restriction violated Harvard policy, the dean to whom he reported it raised no objection. Two years later he received a grant of \$45,700 to organize a conference at Harvard on Islamic fundamentalism. News of the secret source of funds leaked out and on January 1, 1986, Safran was forced to resign as director of the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies (but not as Professor of Government), not for accepting CIA funds but for failing to pay part of the grant as an overhead fee to the university.⁶³

Many of the scholars who emerged as the field's first generation of social scientists around the mid-1960s had earlier connections with U.S. intelligence. William Zartman of N.Y.U. had served in naval intelligence in Morocco and developed close ties with the Moroccan armed forces. J. C. Hurewitz at Columbia, Manfred Halpern at Princeton, his colleague Morroe Berger, the Harvard anthropologist Carlton Coon, and a number of others had done intelligence research during the war or soon afterwards, some with the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA), others at the State Department's Bureau of Research and Intelligence. None of them necessarily maintained their connections with U.S. intelligence after they became academics. Berger, however, the man who chaired the SSRC Near and Middle East Committee and became the founding President of the MESA, had also played a role in the creation of the National Defense Education Act in 1958. As a student in New York in the late 1930s, Berger had been a member of the New York Trotskyist movement, with others like Irving Howe, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Gertrude Himmelfarb, many of whom became active anti-communists after the war

and in several cases moved far to the right.⁶⁴ Some of them, including the journalist Irving Kristol, the N.Y.U. philosopher Sidney Hook, and the editor of *Encounter*, Melvin Lasky, were later funded and supported by the C.I.A. Berger too had connections with the C.I.A. He was a member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and was the scholar who recruited the editor for the Arab counterpart to *Encounter* magazine, *al-Hiwar*. The generous CIA money that he offered the prospective editor carried with it one stipulation: that the journal publish articles dealing with the position of Muslim communities in the Soviet Union.⁶⁵

The founding of MESA so soon after the closure of the American Association for Middle Eastern Studies, and the overlap in the leadership of the two bodies, led some scholars to fear that MESA was simply a continuation of the earlier pro-Washington and pro-Israeli organization. It is not clear that there was any connection, but the suspicion persuaded a group of American scholars of Arab background to establish a rival professional organization. The 1967 war had shocked them into realizing that the scholars speaking about the Middle East in the United States, even the minority who seemed sympathetic to the Arab world, were not from the region and did not speak for the region. The Arab-American scholars began to challenge the style of academic detachment with which establishment scholars maintained both their status as experts and a silence about controversial issues, especially the Palestine question. In 1967-68 they set up the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG), which organized a series of annual conferences and publications under the leadership of Ibrahim Abu-Lughod.⁶⁶ For several years these were scheduled to conflict with the MESA meetings.

The AAUG began to contest not only the leadership of Middle Eastern studies, and its alleged professional detachment, but also its construction of the region of study. A decade later, Abu-Lughod together with Edward Said set up a research center under the auspices of the AAUG, the Institute of Arab Studies, which published the journal *Arab Studies Quarterly* and supported research that defined the Arab world, rather than the Middle East, as the region of study. Their aim was to challenge the premise of Middle Eastern Studies that "the Middle East" was a single cultural region. They argued that this was a colonial conception, which, by including Turkey and Iran with the Arab countries, minimized the much stronger common culture of the Arabic-speaking world. They also believed that expanding the region to include the two non-Arab countries had made the anomalous position of Israel, as a state established by Europeans in the midst of the Arab world, less obvious.

The Crisis of Orientalism

These developments suggest the need to find an alternative way to discuss the problems faced by area studies since the late 1960s and early 1970s. The customary approach to the analysis of area studies proceeds as a discussion of questions of theory. Questions about the construction of the object of knowledge, or the relationship of U.S. based scholars to the politics of the region, if they are discussed at all, tend to be subsidiary to the story of the theoretical development of the field. According to this story, the theory of modernization dominates area studies scholarship until the late 1960s or early 1970s. It is then challenged in the fields of history and political science by the theory of dependency, which emerges in Latin American Studies and then is imported into African, Middle Eastern, and other regions of area studies. These fields attempt, with differing degrees of success, to catch up with the theoretical advances of the Latin American field, which itself moves on into criticisms of the dependency paradigm.

The history of Middle Eastern Studies suggests the possibility of telling a different and more complex story, one whose narrative is not organized in terms of the rise and decline of theories. There are several features of the Middle East studies field that can complicate the story. First, the Middle Eastern critique of modernization theory was first written in the mid-1950s, more than a decade before the appearance of dependency theory in Latin America, and indeed before the full expression of modernization theory itself in works such as Walt Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960).⁶⁷ In 1957 a twenty-six year old Egyptian defended a doctoral thesis in economics in Paris entitled "On the Origins of Underdevelopment: Capitalist Accumulation on a World Scale." Borrowing the ideas of core and periphery from Raul Prebisch, Samir Amin gave them a new significance by arguing that the underdevelopment of the periphery is not a backward stage of development but an equally modern phenomenon of capitalist expansion and the constant "structural adjustment" (Amin's 1957 phrase) to which societies of the periphery are subjected. Capital accumulation is organized on a "world scale," he argued -- two decades before Wallerstein's development of the theory of capitalism as a "world-system" -- and it is on this scale that the problems of local societies should be studied.

Amin had been a student in Paris since 1947, part of a group of Arab, African, Vietnamese and other third-world students who published the journal *Étudiants anticolonialistes* (1949-1953). He also contributed to the radical journal *Moyen Orient*, published in the same years under the editorship of the French Marxist Middle East scholar Maxime Rodinson. Following the completion of his thesis in 1957 Amin put the manuscript in a drawer and returned to Egypt, to engage in the post-Suez War political campaign for a more radical social transformation. In 1960 he was forced to leave Egypt, as the Nasser regime intensified its repression of the left. He spent his exile in West Africa and Paris, and in 1964 published a critique of Nasserist populism, *L'Égypte nasserienne*, under the pseudonym Hasan Riad.⁶⁸ Only in 1970, following the popularity of Latin American dependency theory, was he persuaded to publish his 1957 dissertation. The English translation, *Accumulation on a World Scale*, appeared in New York in 1974.⁶⁹

This story begins to suggest the complexity of some of the factors that shape the "theory" that becomes, or does not become, American area studies. The encounter between the Arab world and the West created its own critique of the modernization paradigm, but under different conditions of migration and exile than those that shaped Latin American *dependencia*. The question of what Edward Said has referred to as "traveling theory" -- the spatial displacements that can turn theory into critical consciousness -- is an important part of the structuring of area

studies. Exiled Arab intellectuals could not easily circulate from one capital of the region to another, as Latin American exiles did within their own region. In Paris they formed broader anti-colonial coalitions, caught up in the 1950s struggles over Indochina and Algeria. In the urgency of such struggles, a thesis could spend a decade in a drawer.

Several other features of the Middle East studies field shaped its development in this period, yet are omitted from standard accounts written in terms of the rise and fall of theories. A second factor was the very success the field enjoyed in the U.S. academy in the 1950s and 1960s, compared to a relatively weak field like Latin American studies. The fact that eight or more of the dozen leading Political Science departments had a tenured Middle East specialist by the late 1960s may well have inhibited the development of rival paradigms. Perhaps the lower stature of Latin American scholarship gave more room for alternative views. For an established field like Middle Eastern studies, moreover, the failures of modernization by the late 1960s could be turned into another argument for the strengthening of area studies. Modernization, it was now claimed, was clearly so complex a process that its success or failure could not be the result of any one series of casual events, as scholars like Rostow had assumed. It must instead be the outcome of any one of a variety of possible combinations of a large number of factors. No single social science discipline, therefore, could provide an explanation. The problem of development could be resolved only in the interdisciplinary fields of area studies.⁷⁰

A third factor follows from this. When dependency theory was taken up as a rival theoretical approach, it was by a cohort of junior scholars whose agenda was not simply the theoretical development of the field but the dismantling of its existing professional organization and the constructing of a new relationship between scholarship and the countries and peoples that it studied. In 1971 a group of young Middle East scholars and activists founded the Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), a collective that began publishing the periodical *MERIP Reports*, later renamed *Middle East Report*. At the 1977 MESA meeting members of the MERIP group and other progressives formed the Alternative Middle East Studies Seminar (AMESS) as a rival scholarly forum. MERIP and AMESS promoted political economy and dependency-related approaches to the region, the study of popular struggles and subaltern groups, a critique of the political oppression practiced by all regimes of the region and of the corporate and government support for most of these regimes in the United States, and the open discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of Palestinian national rights. In Europe in the same period, the journal *Khamsin* began publishing the work of critical Middle East scholars based mostly in Paris, Israel, and Turkey. A group of more established scholars in Britain launched the short-lived but influential *Review of Middle East Studies* (1975 -76, with occasional attempts at revival).⁷¹

Robert Vitalis, a later member of this loose network of critical political economy scholars, argues that the belated incorporation of dependency perspectives into Middle Eastern studies was shaped more by the “metatheoretical” academic and intellectual commitments of the period than by a concern for careful comparative historical analysis. The resulting scholarship, he argues, misread the core *dependencia* texts and was unfamiliar with the Latin American history on which they were based. In the scholarship on Egypt, the country most frequently analyzed, dependency was more a weapon in late 1970s debates about U.S. foreign policy and President Sadat’s abandoning of Nasser’s statist populism and economic opening towards the United States. Used in support of a general Third Worldism that arose in response to the

unrelenting first worldism of establishment Middle East studies, the introduction of dependency theory “foreclosed the possibility,” Vitalis argues, of a more critical and open-ended inquiry into social the organization and interests of Egyptian capitalism.⁷² If one accepts Vitalis’s argument, then once again it was not rival theories that drove the development of Middle Eastern studies. Theory was a language used to authorize rival strategies and commitments in the competing intellectual politics of the field.⁷³

The new Middle East studies scholarship included another element that was to reshape the field. It criticized established scholarship for its reliance on Oriental Studies and its incorporation of this work into the study of the modern period. This critique built upon the earlier work of Arab intellectuals published mostly in Paris, in particular Anouar Abdel Malek’s seminal essay “Orientalism in Crisis” and the essays of Abdullah Laroui.⁷⁴ These works reflected the importance of Paris in the intersection of different Arab exile and post-colonial itineraries. The Algerian war of 1954-63 was an important context for the emergence of post-colonial critiques. As Robert Young argues, the war was also a catalyst in the development of other critiques of modernity.⁷⁵ In the United States there was a related development beginning after the crisis of the 1967 war, as I mentioned, with the founding of the AAUG. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod also established a publishing house that began to publish the work of a new generation of Arab and Arab-American scholars and other like-minded critics, including the work of Edward Said, whose first writing on the U.S. and the Arab world appeared in response to the 1967 war⁷⁶ and whose critique of Orientalism was first articulated at the 1974 AAUG conference.⁷⁷ In London, the brief life of the *Review of Middle East Studies*, which emerged from the meetings of the Hull group, in which Talal Asad played a pivotal role, was devoted largely to essays critiquing the work of modern Orientalists such as Von Grunebaum, Bernard Lewis, Kedourie, and Gibb and Bowen. Asad himself had published an important collection of critical essays, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973).⁷⁸

By that time, the link between Orientalism and area studies was already in question, even among its advocates. In 1974, the same year as Said’s AAUG address, a short essay about Morocco, destined to be influential, rejected the theory of culture that had bought together Orientalists and social scientists.⁷⁹ In his MESA presidential address of that year, Leonard Binder, without mentioning Clifford Geertz by name, attacked the new view that “rejects anthropology’s favored functionalism and argues that a culture is simply what it says it is.”⁸⁰ Showing a new defensiveness, he praised the achievements of Orientalist scholarship but talked of the need to move beyond its limitations. And he put forward a new justification for area studies:

In my own opinion area studies rest upon a single key idea and that is that the object of study, the thing we want to know, is the determining and organizing principle of the intellectual enterprise and not the method or discipline. Research methodology and disciplinary paradigms are not to determine what is selected for study, and they are not to limit observation. Area studies, from this perspective, holds that true knowledge is only possible of things that exist, while methods and theories are abstractions which order observations and other explanations according to non-empirical criteria... The question ... is whether Middle Eastern events constitute a valid unity so that the consequence of their study could reasonably be called knowledge (4-5).⁸¹

The Middle East represents a field for the organization of scholarship simply because it is one of the “things that exist” and therefore an object of “true knowledge.” There is no longer any grand theoretical scheme of total science that creates a reason for area studies. There is simply an empirical claim.

Three years later Said’s *Orientalism* appeared, and repudiated this claim that the Middle East was simply an empirical fact. “But how does one know the ‘things that exist,’” he asked after referring to Binder’s address, and to what extent are they “constituted by the knower?”⁸² The publication of *Orientalism* put establishment Middle East studies on the defensive. It also opened the path to postcolonial theory, which offered the possibility of a form of area studies that did not treat the region as a “thing that exists” but explored in the representation of the non-West fundamental questions about Western ways of knowing and the project of a general social science. This possibility was most clearly developed in the field of South Asian studies.⁸³ Post-colonial theory engaged with the disciplines of history and anthropology (as well as literature), from which and into which its practitioners were drawn, but largely ignored the more nomothetic social sciences and the field of political economy they considered their own. In these disciplinary fields (political science, economics, parts of sociology) there was no corresponding preoccupation with the historical and social construction of the field of knowledge.

By 1978, then, the area studies field that had been professionally organized only a decade or so earlier was threatened on several sides. The assumption of an underlying and determining Middle Eastern cultural unity, the character of the Oriental Studies scholarship from which this assumption was drawn, the intellectual grounds that had enabled area studies to claim to unify the social sciences, the detached, managerial style of knowing to which the field laid claim, and its silences on the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict except where it could speak with an unchallenged expertise: all these features that had shaped Middle Eastern studies were now under interrogation. At the same time, the social sciences had begun to lose interest in area studies. They were developing new, non-territorial ways to affirm their credentials as scientific endeavors. They had lost the territorial ambition to become total sciences, by covering every part of social space -- an ambition that had given area studies an integrating role. They now sought to establish their scientific status by their methodological rigor, a concern that would move them away from rather than towards the area studies programs.

The Crisis of Social Science

The crisis of area studies at the close of the twentieth century was usually understood as the problem of how area fields were related to the academic disciplines. Typically, however, it was only one partner to this relationship that was considered the source of the trouble. Area studies scholars were told that their problems would be solved by getting back together with their disciplinary partners and accepting their authority. Reviews of the state of Middle Eastern studies, as of other regions, even those written by the more critical figures in the field, perhaps especially those, ended with appeals for area scholars to return to their disciplinary homes. The disciplines were more serious sites of scholarship, and most of them, it was said, “can claim to be more universal.”⁸⁴ Yet it is in fact this claim to represent the universal that is in question in the authority of the disciplines. The future of area studies lies in their ability to disturb the

disciplinary claim to universality and the particular place this assigns to areas.

The grounds on which the social science disciplines laid claim to their authority had changed from the situation fifty years ago when U.S. area studies first emerged.⁸⁵ Since the 1970s, the disciplines had gradually had to abandon the attempt to define themselves by asserting academic sovereignty over a particular area of social reality. Anthropologists had lost some time ago their confidence that cultures were something that could be located as distinct, coherent, total ways of life, handily coterminous with a particular nation state.⁸⁶ For political scientists, especially those outside the field of American politics, an effort was made in the 1970s and 1980s to reintroduce the idea of the state as the central object of the discipline. The attempt failed and no other object provided the discipline with a territorial focus.⁸⁷ Economists by the 1970s had abandoned their collective faith in Keynes, who had provided them with a common language for talking about “the economy.” There was no subsequent agreement on whether the economy as a whole or individual rationality was the proper object of economic analysis and the economy itself became increasingly difficult to measure or demarcate.⁸⁸ Sociology had long ago accepted its status as a collection of subfields, many of which shared their territories with parts of other disciplines.

The inability of culture, the state, the economy, or society to survive as distinct territories of social scientific investigation -- what one might call the deterritorialization of the disciplines-- reflected another, related deterritorialization, that of contemporary global history. The confidence of the postwar period that cultures, economies, and social and political systems could each be the object of a separate social science represented an unexamined confidence in the total, self-enclosed, geographically fixed form of the nation-state as the assumed space of all social scientific inquiry. It was, after all, the nation-state that provided the whole of which economy, culture, state, and society were the components parts. Many, probably most, of the difficulties with the ideas of culture, society, state, and economy that emerged in the final decades of the century related to processes, identities, and forces that challenged or outreached the nation-state.

There was an irony here. Transnational forces and identities were said to be one of the major factors placing the future of area studies in question. A region such as the Middle East could no longer be assumed to define a legitimate field of study, it was argued, because so many of the forces of contemporary globalization transcended or cut at right angles to such a region. However, the same deterritorialization had, in a different way, undermined the ability of the social science disciplines to demarcate distinct territories for inquiry. Yet the Social Science Research Council did not call for the dismantling of the disciplines,⁸⁹ and very little effort was made to connect the future of area studies to the very real questions about the current crisis and future shape of the social sciences.

The response of the social sciences to this experience of deterritorialization was to rely increasingly on another means of defining their distinctiveness. They identified themselves by their method. For anthropologists and economists, the concepts of culture and economy had from the beginning come to correspond to distinctive methods of research -- participant observation in one case, the mathematical representation of individual or collective equilibria in the other. In Economics, moreover, field research was left others: it was mostly conducted outside the academy, by statistical agencies of the state. Following deterritorialization, despite frequent disputes about how these methods should be carried out, and despite experiments with various alternatives at the margins, both fields maintained a consensus that participant observation and

equilibrium analysis, respectively, whatever their difficulties, defined the essence of the discipline. Political science and sociology were less fortunate, unable to agree on a method, and increasingly divided by the effort of certain factions to identify the discipline in terms of one particular method.

The concurrent problems of area studies programs arose to a significant extent from this crisis in the social sciences. They arose particularly from the problems faced by Political Science. Although the course of every social science discipline affected what happened to area studies, anthropology and economics presented fewer problems. This was because in anthropology (as in history and literature) everyone was an area expert, while in economics no one was. So neither discipline typically presented its practitioners with the choice between being an area expert or a theorist. In economics you were always the latter (in different degrees of purity), in anthropology you aspired to be both. Sociology continued to be so focused on North America and Western Europe that it remained slightly removed from the debates over area studies, as least as regards a region as neglected as the Middle East. That left political science.

Political science was in an unusual position. A dominant coalition within the discipline sought the intellectual certainty and professional authority of a universal knowledge of politics. Within this coalition a powerful group, which began to control many of the leading departments, believed the formal methods of micro-economics provided the best or even the only means to this universal knowledge. Unlike economists, however, these political scientists could not rely upon the statistical agencies of the state (along with U.N. bodies and the international financial agencies) to carry out their field research for them. This was partly because such agencies concentrated on collecting economic rather than political facts, and partly because the extension of economic methods to the study of political questions very quickly began to involve those messy local details that economists liked to leave aside as so-called externalities. The result was that even the most (self-styled) theoretical of political scientists found it difficult to abandon the need for the kind of local political understanding traditionally supplied by area research. The project of a general social science still had a need for some kind of area studies.

These developments in political science had an implication for area studies. Foreign area studies would not be abandoned, it was said, but would be encouraged by and incorporated into political science. They would be incorporated, however, only as sources of the local and particular knowledge required for constructing the universal knowledge of the discipline. "We should engage more directly with this work [rational choice theory]," wrote David Laitin, "continually tantalizing theorists with uncomfortable data," and "us[ing] our area knowledge to discover interesting anomalies."⁹⁰ This procedure governed both the terms in which and the extent to which area studies was to be appropriated.

Two kinds of terminology became particularly common for establishing the particularity of foreign regions in relation to the generality of political science, the new language of "institutional outcomes" and the older one of "culture". The term "institutional outcome" refers to the assumption that some universal process of change governs the politics and history of non-Western regions, such as the process of development, democratization, globalization, or the introduction of free markets. The pure logic of these processes is locally inflected, however, by the existence of particular coalitions of interest groups, economic distortions, cultural factors, or other anomalies, which shape what is called the "institutional form" of the universal phenomenon.

The other term commonly used for expressing local difference was the old idea of culture. In fact "institutions" was in many uses simply an updated way of talking about cultures. The concept of an institution, understood as a set of rules or constraints that set limits to human action, had the advantage of appearing more compatible with the assumption that action itself was not a cultural process but the universal attempt to maximize individual utility. Both culture and institution, however, referred to those aspects of the social world that could not be explained as simply the actions of individuals maximizing their self-interest, and for this reason were often equivalent. "Cultures," Robert Bates explained, "are distinguished by their distinctive institutions."⁹¹ In the later 1990s, the two terms were brought together under the name of "social capital," which rapidly became the catch-all word for every kind of cultural inheritance, social norm, and institutional practice that could not be reduced to expressions of individual self-interest.

The importance of terms like culture, institution, and social capital, was that by locating the sphere of the local, the particular, and the contingent, they referred to and guaranteed a separate sphere of the universal. This sometimes required political scientists to content themselves with a rather narrow understanding of terms such as culture. Bates, for example, refers to "the political significance of culture and the producers of culture: artists, priests and intellectuals."⁹² Bates was no doubt aware that more than half a century earlier social theorists had broadened the concept of culture to refer not just to the "high culture" of religion, art, and literature but to encompass the whole way of life of a community, or the shared meanings out of which that life is formed. Even if the term was defined to exclude local, interpersonal forms of culture and restricted to the organized expression of ideas defining the public sphere of collective political life, or what was sometimes now termed "public culture," its range would include music, fashion, film, cuisine, advertising, sport, magazines, political debate, popular fiction, television, computer software, and the internet, among other things.⁹³ The "producers" of this public culture are diverse, and include some of the world's largest transnational corporations -- whose prosperity has increasingly come to depend on the power to define, copyright, and manage the production of cultural forms. But political science tended to retain an older definition of culture, compatible with terms like "social capital," that predates the rise of its corporatized, twentieth-century forms. The reference to the producers of culture as "artists, priests, and poets" reflects this understanding. The older definition keeps culture as the residual and secondary phenomenon, distinct from the universal forms of economic or self-interested action, that the nomothetic methods of this form of political science require.

These considerations also governed the extent to which the study of non-Western regions could become incorporated into the discipline, and the circumstances under which this might occur. A review of work in Middle East political economy asked about "the mysterious alchemy through which world regions escape the confines of area studies and achieve legitimate status in general debates about development and underdevelopment."⁹⁴ The alchemy is less mysterious once one acknowledges the force of the term "general" in the question. World regions will be incorporated when, and, to the extent that, they can be made part of certain general narratives: a narrative about industrialization, about democratization, and so on. This is illustrated in the essay by Bates. The problem of studying world regions in political science is the problem of finding a "shared vision," he suggests, a consensus as to what constitutes meaningful research and normal science in the field. He argues that three potential research frameworks exist in the field: first

(for studying middle income countries), democratic theory; second, the political economy of growth; and third, social theory, which examines "contemporary appeals to religion, ethnicity, and identity."⁹⁵ Bates is no doubt correct that only by fitting within such a consensus does area studies work get read by scholars of other regions. Each of these frameworks (even the third, as I discuss below) provides a way of incorporating the non-West into a universal story, whose narrative is always that of global history, which means the history of the West.

The consequence of this relationship between discipline and world region, then, is that the object of study remains defined and grasped only in terms of its relationship to the West, and only in terms of its place in a narrative defined in terms of the global history of the West.

The Middle East and the Provincializing of Political Science

It would not be possible within the space of this essay to give an adequate survey of the state of Middle Eastern Studies at the end of the twentieth century, or to do justice to the range of debates and research projects that animate the field or examine the place of these debates within larger intellectual discussions.⁹⁶ Since the relationship between area studies and disciplines is posed as a particular problem within political science, as I have just suggested, I will focus there, and in particular consider writings on political economy. Even within this narrower topic I do not aim to survey the state of the field. I will consider two or three examples, as illustrations of how the problem of discipline and area is resolved.

Modernization theory remains the dominant framework. The major synthetic study of the region's political economy, by Alan Richards and John Waterbury, states quite plainly the governing assumption that Europe provides the history against which all other histories will be measured, and other histories are to be understood as belated efforts to replicate, more or less successfully, the stages of Europe's history:

Europe's structural transformation over a number of centuries from an agrarian to an industrial urban base has shaped our general understanding of the process [of development] but has not provided a model that will be faithfully replicated in developing countries. The latter may skip some stages by importing technology or telescope others. Developing countries will cope with population growth rates that Europe never confronted. So too, the process of class formation in the Middle East and elsewhere has varied considerably from that of Europe.⁹⁷

The standard criticisms of this approach, from the perspective of capitalism as a structure of accumulation that was global from the beginning, have been written often enough and do not need repeating. I wish to simply make the following point. The authors claim that they are not taking the West as a model that can be faithfully replicated. Exactly so. They are taking it as a model that cannot be faithfully replicated. It is the failures, variations, skipped stages, and telescoped histories -- all the forms of difference from the West, the "anomalies" to which David Laitin refers -- that define the understanding of the region's history and politics. Historical itineraries, political forces, and cultural phenomenon will be included in the story principally in terms of how they cause the Middle East to fit or deviate from the narrative of the West's

modernity. This is not simply a question of what is included or omitted. The story is a universal one of modernization, "a process that has a logic of its own" as Richards and Waterbury affirm.⁹⁸ This logic moves the narrative forward, representing the source of historical change and the motor of social transformations. The local variations, distortions, delays, and accelerations receive their meaning and relevance from this singular logic. They may divert or rearrange the movement of history, but are not themselves that universal movement. This is modernization theory without apologies. "One might object that all this is simply 'closet modernization theory,'" Richards and Waterbury acknowledge, but the defensive tone is quickly abandoned. "If this be modernization theory, make the most of it!"⁹⁹

Conventional modernization theory of this sort analyzes the political economy of the Middle East in terms of two simple, universal concepts: the state and the economy. In place of the complex workings of political power at different levels and in different social fields, it substitutes the narrow idea of the state and analyzes politics as the formulation and execution of a limited range of economic programs and reforms. The narrative assesses the success of these programs by describing changes in the size and structure of "the economy" as represented by conventional measures of GDP, sectoral balance, share of world trade, and so on.

A number of more critical works have explored some of the problems with this approach. Simon Bromley points out that the distinction between state and economy cannot be taken for granted in studying a region such as the Middle East. Following Karl Polanyi, he recalls that establishing this distinction was a central feature of the history of advanced capitalism in the West. The distinction removed the process of appropriating surplus value from the contested sphere of politics and increasingly confined it to the organization of economic life. Yet Bromley's critique turns out to have important limitations. Having reminded us that the separation of the economic and the political is not a universal phenomenon, Bromley assumes that the Middle East should nevertheless be understood in the same terms. The struggle to consolidate the separation of state and market "has been a large part of what the history of these societies has been about," he writes. It remains, however, "unfinished business." The positive step of provincializing categories that social science takes as universal (and as marking even the boundaries between the disciplines of universal social scientific knowledge) is undone by taking the formation of these social categories as the framework in which to understand the history of the non-west. This history then inevitably appears unfinished.¹⁰⁰

Interpreting Middle Eastern histories as incomplete or even simply variant cases of universal processes can produce unusual readings of political developments. Kiren Chaudhry has been one of the most serious advocates of the need to reinsert the study of the Middle East into the general field of political economy, where it could become, she believes, "an important piece of the development puzzle."¹⁰¹ In a well received study of state formation in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, she too follows Polanyi in understanding the creation of the national state as simultaneously the creation of a national economy, a process that matches "the broadest sequencing patterns of state-making in early modern Europe," with important local variations.¹⁰² Yet to make the history of the Arabian peninsular fit the sequences of modern Europe requires a peculiar reading of that history. As in Europe, Chaudhry argues, state and national economy were built upon the development of taxation. To claim this, however, as Robert Vitalis points out, a variety of financial relationships specific to the history of Arabia -- pilgrim revenues, British and U.S. subventions, extortions from merchants, advances on petroleum royalties -- must be described as taxes.¹⁰³ And ARAMCO, the US oil consortium that created large parts of

the Saudi state as extensions of its oil business, receives no more than a passing mention. The conclusion to Chaudhry's study acknowledges, realistically enough, that despite the aspiration to place the Middle East into a general narrative of modernization and development, no general statements about "the development puzzle" can be derived from her cases. Institutional outcomes, she admits, "can co-vary in highly irregular ways that cannot be captured in any formulaic fashion."¹⁰⁴ The foreign capital that transformed her two cases of state formation following the 1970s oil boom produced "both similarities and differences of institutional outcome." These outcomes "depend on a host of historically constituted relationships."¹⁰⁵

Such examples could be multiplied. What they show is that, on present evidence, reinserting Middle East area studies into the generalizing languages of political economy does not produce any increase in a universal knowledge of politics. It may help undermine some of the unsupportable generalization of others, as Chaudhry shows convincingly in the case of the new institutional literature. But such general theories are usually adequately critiqued when they first appear.¹⁰⁶ The generalizations survive simply as unsupported "theories" to be endlessly refuted, long after they are dead, in area studies scholarship.

Writing about the politics of the Middle East as part of a general science of politics functions largely as a rhetorical device, providing linguistic markers of one's seriousness of purpose and scientific credentials. The phrasing of sentences and the titles of books constantly resituate the historical account as simply a specific instance of a set of vaguely specified universal phenomena. A particular case, it is said, "exposes the importance of domestic contingencies," while another shows that "[c]apitalists, disunited, can undo the efforts of nascent state builders," and so on.¹⁰⁷

And there is, as I have been suggesting, a significant loss if one allows the authority of the social science disciplines to persuade us that the only worthwhile ways of engaging with the politics and history of other world regions is to the extent that they can be made to appear as particular instances of the universal stories told in and about the West. The language of political economy and the market now represent, as a contemporary form of modernization theory, the universal truth to which all local experiences must be related, and into whose language all local political expression must be translated. Chaudhry, for example, proposes as a model research project for further development of the field of Middle Eastern political economy a study of "ideational landscapes of economic deprivation."¹⁰⁸ Noting the great number of social movements across the region today involved in different forms of moral protest and struggles over political identity and community, she proposes a comparative study to examine, in these differences, the variety of ways in which "local economic and political interests are expressed in the language of religion and identity." She adds that "these different reactions promise insight into fundamental alterations in the relationship between economic and political organization, between government and citizens."¹⁰⁹ In other words, the diversity of languages in which communities articulate their political demands and identities, their visions and their apprehensions, are to be translated into the universal language of political economy. As Dipesh Chakrabarty points out in a different context, what this amounts to saying is that one has nothing to learn from what these subaltern groups are actually saying. The languages of political Islam, for example, can appear in Western scholarship only through a process of translation that enables them to speak in terms of the modernizing discourse of the West. There is no way around this problem of translation. But those anxious to contribute to the universal knowledge of the social

sciences seldom seem to recognize it as a problem.¹¹⁰

The local forms of political organization and expression are understood as mere languages, meaning the cultural and “ideational” forms for expressing the more real interests that shape their world. The language into which these expressions are translated, political economy, is assumed by definition not to be an ideational form, not a cultural practice, but the transparent and universal terminology of economic reality. Thus, in discussing the economic crises in terms of which these cultural responses will be analyzed, Chaudhry notes that, “[t]hrough economic liberalization, domestic constituencies long protected from international prices experienced the *genuine* scarcities of their heretofore protected societies.”¹¹¹ The prices of a protected national market are false, it is implied, those of the international market are genuine. Both markets, both sets of scarcities, however, are political arrangements, reflecting the enforcement of certain constructions and distributions of property, power, monopoly and social management. Both can exist only, if one wants to use the term, as ideational landscapes -- that is, as arrangements formed in part out of understandings about property, wealth, prices, and so on. Political economy itself plays an important role in formulating and framing these understandings. Yet because the market, and especially the global market, is understood as a universal form, it cannot by definition be something “cultural,” something locally made. The cultural refers to the particular and local, the province of area studies, not to the genuine and universal, the province of those other area programs, the social sciences.

The proposal that Middle Eastern area studies be strengthened by bringing them back under the authority and vision of the social sciences has been made at regular intervals. It reflects the larger desire that was expressed in the origins of area studies. During the consolidation of professional American social science between the 1930s to the 1950s, area studies programs were called into being to provide a supplement to social science, a supplement that would help make it whole. The ambition to create forms of social science whose knowledge expressed universal truths required the study of non-western regions, both to reveal any “provincialism within these disciplines,” as Pendleton Herring argued in 1947, and to provide the physical “body” whose study could provide the living organism that would bring the separate disciplines together and overcome their new isolation. The professionalization of area studies was accomplished by the mid-1960s, yet from the same moment the impossibility of the project began to reveal itself. This impossibility, this resistance, did not appear so much at the level of what is called theory, although one can trace it at that level. It made itself felt in other ways, in careers, wars, organizations, problems over funding and so on. Scholars from the region of study, finding in their own lives the experience of being simultaneously scholars and objects of study, began to raise questions about the construction of the region as an object of study. Far more effectively than mere theory, these circulations of ideas, political forces, refugees, armies, and exiles began to dislocate the claim that area studies made to a disinterested, managerial expertise. More clearly, perhaps, than any other field, the crisis of area studies produced ways of grasping the conditions of possibility and the limits of Western social science.

Area studies has no compelling future as merely the servant of the American social sciences. In the 1990s, as we saw, area studies were called upon to “tantalize” the social sciences with uncomfortable data. To tantalize -- to excite by offering something desirable, perhaps unobtainable -- was the old role of the Orient in the Western imagination. Fifty years earlier, the disciplines hoped that areas studies would reveal the existence of provincialism in the social

sciences, and enable them to overcome it. Area studies has taken up the theme of provincialism, but explored it in a different way. Chakrabarty has called for a writing of history that would "provincialize Europe," scholarship that re-writes the history of modernity as something contested and ambivalent, and make visible its repressions, marginalizations, and its necessary incompleteness. I have tried to suggest here a similar future for area studies: to provincialize the social sciences. Area studies offers a place from which to rewrite the history of the social sciences, and to examine how their categories are implicated in a certain history of Europe and, in the twentieth century, an unachieved American project of universal social science.

Notes

An earlier version of some sections this essay also appear in “Deterritorialization and the Crisis of Social Science,” in *Localizing Knowledge in a Globalizing World: Re-Casting the Area Studies Debate*, ed. Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu, and Frederick Weaver (Syracuse University Press, 2003). Omnia Elshakry provided extensive assistance with the research for the paper. David Ludden, Robert Vitalis, and the late Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, gave advice. Alice Diaz, Michael DiNiscia, and Kristine McNeil also provided help. The author alone is responsible for the views expressed.

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1. *Middle East Journal*, 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1947), 1-2.
 2. *Ibid.*, 2
 3. *Ibid.*, 4
 4. James Bill, “The Study of Middle East Politics 1946-1996: A Stocktaking,” *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 501-512.
 5. Leonard Binder, “Area Studies: A Critical Reassessment,” *The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), 1-28, at 16.
 6. Manfred Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies: A Review of the State of the Field with a Few Examples,” *World Politics* 15 (October 1962): 108-122, at 117, 118.
 7. The quotations in this paragraph are from Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies,” 121; Binder, “Area Studies,” 19; Bill, “The Study of Middle East Politics,” 501.
 8. Stanley Heginbotham, “Rethinking International Scholarship: The Transition from the Cold War Era,” *Items: Newsletter of the SSRC* 48, no. 2/3 (1994): 33-40. Critical studies of the Middle East have usually related its genesis to World War II and the Cold War. See Peter Johnson and Judith Tucker, “Middle East Studies Network in the United States,” *MERIP Reports* 38 (1975): 3-20; Irene L. Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985); Lisa Hajjar and Steve Niva, “(re) Made in the USA: Middle East Studies in the Global Era,” *Middle East Report* no. 205 (October/December 1997): 2-9.
 9. Robert Hall, *Area Studies, with Special Reference to Their Implications for Research in the Social Sciences* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947); Vicente Rafael, “The Cultures of Area Studies in the United States,” *Social Text* 41 (Winter 1994): 91-111. Rafael draws on Hall's influential report. On the prewar development of studies of the non-West see Frederick Cooper, “Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept,” in *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 64-92.
 10. Barbara Barksdale Clowse, *Brainpower for the Cold War: The Sputnik Crisis and National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, 1981), 49. See also Rafael, “The Cultures of Area Studies.”
 11. Clowse, *Brainpower for the Cold War*, 42-43.
 12. Before the passing of the NDEA, Ford established the Foreign Area Fellowships Program (1951) and a Division

of International Training and Research (1952), with a mandate to establish university area studies centers. By the time it was terminated in 1966, the Division had awarded grants of \$270 million to 34 universities. By comparison, cumulative NDEA funding of area studies centers from 1959 to 1987 amounted to only \$167 million (of which 13.4 percent, or about \$22 million, was allocated to Middle Eastern studies). Besides Middle East area studies centers, Ford also funded the establishing of the Center for Arabic Studies in Cairo (for language training), and the Middle East Technical University in Ankara (for training a regional managerial class), among other institutions. R. Bayly Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," *Middle East Journal* 41, no. 1 (1987): 40-63, at 54-55. The NDEA figures are calculated from table 4. They do not include amounts allocated for Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships.

13. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 248.

14. The emergence of ancient Near Eastern studies in the United States, in the period between the 1880s and 1930s, lies outside the scope of this essay. Bruce Kuklick traces how nineteenth-century German "higher criticism," which questioned the historical veracity of the Bible, prompted American biblical scholars, beginning at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1880s, to mount the first scientific archaeological expeditions to Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley. These moved the focus of research away from ancient Palestine, and led to the creation of ancient Near Eastern studies outside the framework of Bible studies. *Puritans in Babylon: The Ancient Near East and American Intellectual Life, 1880-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

15. Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 101.

16. Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," 43-44.

17. Philip K. Hitti, "Arabic and Islamic Studies at Princeton University," *Muslim World* 31, no. 3 (1941): 292-4, quotations from 293 and 294.

18. James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder, "Philip K. Hitti," in *The World of Islam: Studies in Honour of Philip K. Hitti*, ed. James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder (London: Macmillan, 1960); Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," 41-43.

19. For example, see the bibliographies of literature dealing with the Mandate territories since 1919, published in the 1930s under the auspices of American University in Beirut (Social Science Series).

20. See also Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia: An Anthropological Approach*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall 1998), chap. 2

21. Sir Hamilton Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West: A Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture in the Near East*, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, vol. 1, part 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1950); vol. 1, part 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1957). See also H.A.R. Gibb, *Whither Islam?* (1932).

22. Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol.1, part 1, 3.

23. *Ibid.*, 4-14.

24. *Ibid.*, 13-14.

25. Gibb and Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West*, vol.1, part 2.

26. *The Near East: Problems and Prospects*, Proceedings of the Eighteenth Institute of the Norman Wait Harris

Memorial Foundation, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, June 25-30 1942.

27. The program included four other topics: the Israeli farmer, the immigrant in Israel, the Palestine Arab refugee, and the crisis in the Near East, each reflecting the events of 1948-49. This willingness to include the study of Israel and the Palestine question as a normal part of an academic conference was soon to disappear, as I note below. The conference papers were published in Sidney N. Fisher, ed., *Social Forces in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955).

28. Morroe Berger "Middle Eastern and North Africa Studies: Development and Needs," *MESA Bulletin* vol. 1 no. 2, November 15 1967, 1-18, at 8; Elbridge Sibley, *Social Science Research Council: The First Fifty Years* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1974). The papers of the 1966 SSRC conference were published in Ira Lapidus, ed., *Middle Eastern Cities: A Symposium on Ancient, Islamic, and Contemporary Middle Eastern Urbanism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); papers from another SSRC conference, in June 1967, were published in Michael A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to the Present Day* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

29. Edmond Doutté, *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers: Jourdan, 1908); Arnold van Gennep, *En Algerie* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1914); Robert Montagne, *La vie sociale et la vie politique du Berberes* (1931); Edward Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (1926); Winifred Blackman, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt: Their Religious, Social and Industrial Life To-day with Special Reference to Survivals from Ancient Times* (1927); Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, 2 vols. (Helsinki: Finska vetenskaps-soceteten, 1931 and 1935); and Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1937), and *The Nuer, a Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940) (neither of which dealt with an Arabic-speaking community). Also important was the work of Hans Kohn on nationalism: *Geschichte der Nationalen Bewegung im Orient* (Berlin 1928), Eng. trans., *A History of Nationalism in the East* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929) and *Nationalismus und Imperialismus im Vorderen Orient* (Frankfurt 1931), Eng. trans., *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1932). On the scholarship of this period, see Eickelman, *The Middle East and Central Asia*, chap. 2; Jean-Claude Vatin, ed., *Connaissances du Maghreb: Sciences Sociales et Colonisation* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1984); Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and The Colonial Encounter* (London: Ithaca Press, 1973); and three essays by Edmund Burke: "La mission scientifique au Maroc," in *Actes de Durham: Recherches recentes sur le Maroc moderne* (Rabat: Publication du Bulletin Economique et Social du Maroc, 1979), 37-56, "The Sociology of Islam: The French Tradition," in *Islamic Studies: A Tradition and Its Problems*, ed. Malcolm H. Kerr (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1980), 73-88, and "The First Crisis of Orientalism, 1890-1914," in Vatin, *Connaissances*, 213-26.

30. A.H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon* (London 1946), George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (1946), Charles Issawi, *Egypt: An Economic and Social Analysis* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq, a Study in Iraqi Politics since 1932* (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), Afif Tannous, *The Arab Village Community in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1944), Alfred Bonn , *State and Economics in the Middle East: A Society in Transition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948), Bernard Augustus Keen, *The Agricultural Development of the Middle East* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1946).

31. H. A. R. Gibb, *Area Studies Reconsidered* (London: School of African and Oriental Studies, 1964), cited in Peter Johnson and Judith Tucker, "Middle East Studies Network in the United States," *MERIP Reports* no. 38 (1975): 3-20, at 7.

32. American Council of Learned Societies, *A Program for Near Eastern Studies in the United States* (Washington D.C. 1949), cited Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," 45. According to Winder, the anthropologist was probably Carlton Coon. Coon's writings included *Tribes of the Rif* (1931); *Southern Arabia: A Problem for the Future* (1944), *Caravan: The Story of the Middle East* (1951), and *The Impact of the West on Middle Eastern Social Institutions* (1952).

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33. The only established historian in the U.S. who worked in any of the languages of the region was Philip Hitti at Princeton. Hamilton Gibb wrote in 1956 that “In England and France there are at most only three or four Orientalist scholars who are professional historians... In the United States it would be hard to find as many.” H.A.R. Gibb, “Problems of Modern Middle Eastern History,” in Middle East Institute, *Report on Current Research* (Washington D.C.: Middle East Institute, 1956), cited Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies,” 119.
34. Several other leading European-trained Oriental Studies scholars came to the U.S., including scholars of Islamic art (Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar), Islamic law (Joseph Schacht), and religion (Wilfred Cantwell Smith) and, in the mid 1970s, the historian Bernard Lewis. In the later 1980s and 1990s a second generation of senior European scholars moved to the U.S., almost entirely from Britain, including Talal Asad, Michael Cook, Patricia Crone, Michael Gilsenan, Roger Owen, and Peter Sluglett.
35. To give one example, Manfred Halpern described Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961) as “scholarly, brilliant, and written with style,” but complained that “it lacks a systematic conceptual or theoretical framework.” Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies,” 111.
36. Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (Glencoe, IL.: The Free Press, 1958).
37. Timothy P. Mitchell, “Fixing the Economy,” *Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no.1 (1988): 82-101; and *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
38. Timothy P. Mitchell, “The Limits of the State,” *American Political Science Review*, , vol. 85 (1991): 77-96; and “Society, Economy, and State Effect,” in George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 76-97.
39. The new concept of culture opened the way for post-war U.S. anthropology to study complex, literate societies, including those of the Middle East. Clifford Geertz, *After the Fact: Two Countries, Four Decades, One Anthropologist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 43-44.
40. See the Harvard memorandum produced by Talcott Parsons, Clyde Kluckhohn, O. H. Taylor and others in the 1940s, “Towards a Common Language for the Areas of the Social Sciences,” cited Clifford Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 41. See also Geertz, *After the Fact*, 99-109.
41. The professionalization of the social sciences during the interwar period and the rise of “scientism” is examined in Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
42. For a discussion of the literature on nationalism, see my article, “The Stage of Modernity,” in Timothy P. Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000), pp.1-34.
43. Halpern, “Middle Eastern Studies,” 121.
44. *Ibid.*, 111.
45. Pendleton Herring, quoted in Charles Wagley, *Area Research and Training: A Conference Report on the Study of World Areas*, SSRC Pamphlet No. 6 (New York: Social Science Research Council, June 1948), 6-7.
46. Wagley, *Area Research and Training*, 9.

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47. Talcott Parsons, quoted in Wagley, *Area Research and Training*, 6.
48. *Ibid.*, 5-6.
49. NYU, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, "MESA" file. Vicente Rafael examines the gendered features of the construction of post-war area studies, "The Culture of Area Studies in the United States," 94-95.
50. Plans for attracting economists and sociologists into Middle East studies were much less successful. Of 81 faculty members teaching non-language courses on the Middle East at NDEA Centers in 1964-65, only four were in economics and three in sociology. Morroe Berger "Middle Eastern and North Africa Studies: Development and Needs," *MESA Bulletin*, 1, no.2 (November 15, 1967): 14.
51. Morroe Berger, "Middle Eastern and North African Studies," 16.
52. Said, *Orientalism*, 288-89.
53. Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Board of Directors, University of Chicago, December 9, 1967. Hagop Kevorkian Center, MESA file. At its fourth meeting, on March 18 1988, the Board amended these minutes to drop the reference to the sensitivity of the subject. Shabatai was an Israeli graduate student, enrolled at the University of Chicago.
54. Gendzier, *Managing Political Change*; Rafael, "The Cultures of Area Studies," 92-98.
55. Halpern, "Middle Eastern Studies," 112-113; Leonard Binder, "Prolegomena to the Comparative Study of Middle East Governments," *American Political Science Review*, vol 51, no. 3 (Sep 1957): 651-668; Morroe Berger, *The Arab World Today* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962).
56. Leonard Binder, "1974 Presidential Address," *MESA Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (Feb 1975): 10, discussing the previous year's meeting.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," 59-60. Winder does not mention which political sources subsidized the journal, but it was both pro-Washington and pro-Israel in its politics.
59. I. William Zartman, "History of MESA: The Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc." Mimeo. Middle East Studies Association of North America, September 1970, p. 5. Later the same year, in October 1964, a journal of the same name was launched in London, under the editorship of Prof. Elie Kedourie of the London School of Economics.
60. On C.I.A. involvement in Middle Eastern studies see Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*, 148-52.
61. Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: New Press, 1999), originally published as *Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).
62. Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, 334.
63. Winder, "Four Decades of Middle Eastern Study," 61-62.
64. Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left From the 1930s to the*

1980s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 311-21.

65. Personal communication from Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, August 3 2000. Morroe Berger had attempted to recruit Abu-Lughod to edit the magazine. Berger did not reveal the source of the funds, but the large amount of money on offer and the stipulation concerning the Soviet Union made Abu-Lughod suspicious. When the facts about their involvement with the CIA emerged in the late 1960s, many of the American intellectuals who received funds from the CIA claimed that they had not realized who was paying them. Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War*, using sources from within the CIA, raises powerful doubts about this claim.
66. See the booklet, *AAUG: The First Ten Years*, for a history of the group. My discussion of the AAUG also draws on a personal communication from Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, August 3, 2000.
67. Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
68. Samir Amin (pseudonym Hasan Riad), *L'Égypte nassérienne* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1964).
69. Samir Amin, *L'Accumulation à l'échelle mondiale*, Paris Anthropos, 1970, Eng. trans. *Accumulation on a World Scale*, 2 vols (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974). My account is based on Amin's autobiographical account in *Re-Reading the Postwar Period: An Intellectual Itinerary*, trans. Michael Wolfers (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1994), chaps. 2 and 3.
70. Leonard Binder, "Area Studies: A Critical Reassessment," 13.
71. Lisa Hajjar and Steve Niva, "(re) Made in the USA: Middle East Studies in the Global Era," *Middle East Report* 205 (Oct - Dec 1997): 2-9.
72. Robert Vitalis, "The End of Third Worldism in Egyptian Studies," *Arab Studies Journal* 4, no.1 (Spring 1996): 13-32, at 26.
73. For a slightly different view of the period, see Hajjar and Niva, "(re) Made in the USA." Among the many important works that came out of the emphasis on political economy were: Roger Owen, *The Middle East in World Economy* (New York: Methuen, 1981); Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman, *Workers on the Nile: Nationalism, Communism, Islam, and the Egyptian Working Class, 1882-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) Huri Islamoglu-Inan, ed. *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Peter Gran, *Islamic Roots of Capitalism* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1979); Irene Gendzier, *Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World* (Boulder, Co.: Westview, 1985); Caglar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey* (London: Verso, 1987); Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) and *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979). This period also saw the first serious attempts to introduce gender in the writing of Middle East history, such as Judith Tucker, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
74. Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," *Diogenes* 44 (1959/1963), 103-140; Abdallah Laroui, *La crise des intellectuels arabes: traditionalisme ou historicisme?* (Paris: Maspero, 1974); Eng. translation, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976).
75. Young's overview of post-war theories of history overturns the standard historiographical interpretation of the emergence of post-structuralism: "If so-called 'so-called poststructuralism' is the product of a single historical moment, then that moment is probably not May 1968 but rather the Algerian War of independence-- no doubt itself both a symptom and a product. In this respect it is significant that Sartre, Althusser, Derrida and Lyotard, among others [Cixous, Bourdieu, Fanon], were all either born in Algeria or personally involved with the events of the war."

Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing, History, and the West* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 1.

76. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1970); *The Transformation of Palestine: Essays on the Origin and Development of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1971); and *Settler Regimes in Africa and the Arab World: The Illusion of Endurance* (Wilmette, Illinois: Medina University Press International, 1974). Edward W. Said, "The Arab Portrayed," in *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod.

77. Published in Naseer Aruri, ed., *Middle East Crucible: Studies on the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973* (Wilmette, Ill.: Medina University Press International, 1975).

78. Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London: Ithaca Press, 1973).

79. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 3-30. Already in *Islam Observed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), Geertz had criticized the Orientalists' view that there is a single cultural essence that shapes Islamic societies everywhere.

80. Binder, "1974 Presidential Address, Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (1975): 1-11, at p. 4. Geertz's work helped lead to the emergence a decade later of cultural studies, which developed its own critique of area studies -- and at the same time provided new themes for the organization of interdisciplinary programs and thus for means of escape from the narrow world of the social sciences, as area studies had provided a generation earlier.

81. Leonard Binder, "1974 Presidential Address."

82. Said, *Orientalism*, 300, italics in original.

83. See the chapter by Nicholas Dirks in this volume.

84. Rashid Khalid, "Is There a Future for Middle East Studies?" *MESA Bulletin*, July 1995.

85. A related argument could be made about the discipline of history.

86. For recent discussions see Clifford Geertz, *After The Fact*, chap. 3; Arjun Appadurai, "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology," in *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

87. See Mitchell, "The Limits of the State."

88. See Mitchell, "Fixing the Economy;" Robert Heilbroner and William Milberg, *The Crisis of Vision in Modern Economic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chaps. 4 and 5.

89. But see Immanuel Wallerstein et al., *Open the Social Sciences* (Stanford University Press, 1996).

90. David Laitin, "Letter from the Incoming President," *APSA-CP* (Newsletter of the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association) 4, no. 4 (1993): 3.

91. Robert Bates, "Letter from the President," *APSA-CP* (Newsletter of the APSA Comparative Politics Section) 7, no. 1 (1996): 1

92. Robert H. Bates, "Letter from the President: Theory in Comparative Politics?," *APSA-CP* 8 no. 1 (1997): 1.

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93. The study of these forms has developed, among other places, in the journal Public Culture.
94. "The Middle East and the Political Economy of Development," *Items* 48 nos 2/3, (1994): 41-49, at 42.
95. Bates, "Letter from the President: Theory in Comparative Politics?" 1-2.
96. Two critical surveys by Lila Abu-Lughod provide a review of scholarship on the Middle East in anthropology and gender studies: "Anthropology's Orient: The Boundaries of Theory on the Arab World," (Get reference, 1990); and "Introduction," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).
97. Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), 37.
98. Ibid.
99. Richards and Waterbury, *A Political Economy of The Middle East*, 75.
100. Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1994), 186.
101. Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, "The Middle East and the Political Economy of Development," *Items* vol. 48, nos 2/3 (1994): 41-49, at 49.
102. Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth: Economics and Institutions in the Middle East* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 98.
103. Robert Vitalis, Review of Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 659-61.
104. Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, 314.
105. Ibid., 311, 314.
106. As Paul Cammack did with the new institutionalism, for example, in *Socialist Register* [get ref].
107. Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, 310.
108. Chaudhry, "The Middle East and the Political Economy of Development," 45-48.
109. Ibid., 45, 46.
110. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," *Perspectives*, November 1997, 37-43. See also Talal Asad, "The Limits of Religious Criticism in the Middle East: Notes on Islamic Public Argument," in *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
111. Chaudhry, "The Middle East and the Political Economy of Development," 47, italics added.