



**NEW CONFLICTS, NEW ORIENTALISTS: HOW
MILITARY THEORISTS REPRODUCED ORIENTALISM
IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

**YENİ ÇATIŞMALAR, YENİ ORYANTALİSTLER:
ASKERİ TEORİSYENLER YİRMİ BİRİNCİ YÜZYILDA
ORYANTALİZMİ NASIL YENİDEN ÜRETTİLER?**

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ABSTRACT

Efforts to understand the twenty-first century conflicts have led to the appearance of many unconventional studies. While many analyze the new conflicts as the method of the “weak”, others analyzed twenty-first century conflicts as the method of specific “cultures.” In this study, it is argued that many military theorists, who use the cultural analysis of new conflicts, also reproduce new forms of orientalism. Based on this argument, the study questions whether the orientalist discourse used in these works maintains continuity with the classical orientalist discourse or creates a new one specific to the twenty-first century. To answer that, first, drawing on Edward Said's and Patrick Porter's works, classical orientalism is outlined. Then, to make the comparison, neo-orientalist theses regarding the continuity of colonialist and Euro-Centric perspectives are examined. Finally, selected texts and expressions from Counterinsurgency and Fourth Generation Warfare literatures are analyzed. As a result, it is

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* Makale Geliş Tarihi / Article Received: 08.02.2024
Makale Kabul Tarihi / Article Accepted: 07.05.2024

concluded that these studies reproduce Orientalism and there is a continuity.

Keywords: Orientalism, Military Orientalism, Neo-Orientalism, 21st Century Wars, New Conflicts.

ÖZ

Yirmi birinci yüzyılın çatışmalarını anlama çabaları, birçok geleneksel olmayan çalışmanın ortaya çıkmasını beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu çalışmaların birçoğu yeni çatışmaları “zayıfların” yöntemi olarak analiz ederken, diğerleri yirmi birinci yüzyıl çatışmalarını belirli “kültürlerin” yöntemi olarak analiz etmiştir. Bu çalışmada, yeni çatışmaların kültürel analizini kullanan birçok askeri teorisyenin aynı zamanda oryantalist söylemi yeniden ürettiği savunulmaktadır. Bu savdan hareketle, bu çalışma, söz konusu çalışmalarda kullanılan oryantalist söylemin klasik oryantalist söylemle süreklilik mi içerdiğini, yoksa yirmi birinci yüzyıla özgü yeni bir söylem mi oluşturduğunu sorgulamaktadır. Bunu yanıtlamak için öncelikle, Edward Said'in ve Patrick Porter'in eserlerinden yararlanılarak klasik oryantalizmin öncülleri ortaya konulmuştur. Ardından, karşılaştırma yapabilmek için, sömürgeci ve Avrupa merkezci bakış açılarının sürekliliği perspektifinden neo-oryantalizm tezleri incelenmiştir. Son olarak, Ayaklanma Karşıtı Mücadele ve Dördüncü Nesil Savaş literatürlerinden seçilmiş metinler ve ifadeler analiz edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmaların oryantalizmi yeniden ürettiği ve bir süreklilik olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oryantalizm, Askeri Oryantalizm, Neo-Oryantalizm, 21. Yüzyıl Savaşları, Yeni Çatışmalar.

INTRODUCTION

When Tedd Brown, one of the US generals in the 2003 Iraq War, expressed the words ‘you have to understand the Arab mind. (...) The only thing they understand is force -force, pride and saving face’ about Iraqis, (Filkins, 2003) Patrick Porter criticized him by writing as ‘you do not have to be Edward Said to see the problem here.’ (Porter, 2013: 57). As Porter emphasized, it is clear that some expressions and approaches clearly reveal orientalist codes. In this study, by

supporting Porter's thesis, I also argue that many military theorists reproduce new (open and embedded) forms of orientalism while they analyze the security environment in the twenty-first century. And based on this argument, the study questions whether the orientalist discourse used in these works maintains continuity with the classical orientalist discourse or creates a new one specific to the twenty-first century.

The fact that asymmetric conflicts gradually increased their weight after the Second World War and became almost all of the conflicts in post-Cold War period, (Havard, Rustad, Urdal and Nygard, 2019) has led to evaluations that these new types of conflicts are not unique to the Cold War conjuncture. These evaluations were followed by efforts to understand the *new*, which shows continuity. Furthermore, the fact that the weak parties of the conflicts frequently achieve targeted political goals, in other words, 'the weak win' (Toft, 2001) increased the effect of the unconventional studies.

First inclination to understand the post-Cold War security environment was based on connecting new conflicts to the globalization process. The *New Wars* approach (Kaldor, 1999; Münkler, 2004) was the first to stand out in unconventional approaches which create a globalization linkage to new conflicts. The second inclination was based on connecting new conflicts to *cultures*. A group of approaches were alleging that there is a distinction between the 'West' and the 'East'. This distinction is identified with not only the organization and practicing the war, it is also identified with the cultures, which is alleged by being the fundamental determinant of social, political and organizational background. Among these, Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW), assesses that the last generation of warfare, which is based on 'Eastern war culture' is the main reason why the weak win. (Lind et al., 1989) In addition to 4GW thesis, counterinsurgency (COIN) studies, which have a long past on focusing on societies since the imperial periods, started to use general cultural formulations, rather than case-based social dynamics.

The current military orientalism literature provides a comprehensive framework on how orientalism integrated to military studies, especially in post-Cold War world. In this study, I support military orientalism thesis by enlarging it to two specific area, 4GW and COIN studies. Just as the other examples in military orientalism studies, also in the 4GW and COIN studies, both the language used when making the East-West distinction and the qualities attributed to the 'Eastern war' bear the traces of a cultural standardization and 'labelling' beside the technical warfare analysis. In this direction I question whether the orientalist discourse used in these works maintains continuity with the classical orientalist discourse or creates a new one specific to the twenty-first century.

The classical orientalism appeared in imperial age, where colonialism was one of the main characteristics of international relations, racism and Euro-Centric 'civilization' discourse were explicit. However, after the experience of Second World War and decolonization process, these concepts have left or became implicit. If there is a continuity between imperial period and twenty first century discourses, this can be an indicator to new studies based on the thesis that the colonial, Euro-Centric and racist perspectives are transformed, not dissolved in post-Second World War process.

To explore this question, a comparison will be made between the classical orientalist discourse and the discourses used in 21st-century non-conventional military studies. Secondary sources will be utilized in both cases, drawing from existing literature on orientalism and military orientalism. In addition, parallel discourses within the COIN and 4GW studies, which have not been adequately examined from an orientalist perspective, will be investigated to determine if such discourses exist and, if so, through which concepts they are constructed.

Edward Said's works will serve as the basis for delineating classical orientalist discourses. For the 21st-century discourses, military orientalism studies will be the foundation, with a focus on COIN and 4GW studies. Examining COIN studies is particularly important because the roots of this approach can be traced back to the imperial era, specifically in the approaches taken towards societies that revolted against Britain and were colonies at the time. Observing whether similar discourses produced during that imperial period are being similarly used by a different country (the USA) in contemporary contexts will be useful for assessment.

To bridge these two periods and strengthen the theoretical basis of the comparison, studies on neo-orientalism will be examined, which question the transformation of orientalism and its connection to existing post-colonial approaches. Within this framework, an inquiry into whether a racist, Euro-Centric, and neo-colonial approach persists in the production of orientalist discourse will be conducted to establish connections between the two periods.

In this respect, I structured the study as follows: First of all, I make an eclectic reading of orientalism and reveal the 'eastern definitions' that affect twenty-first century military orientalism. One of the most important characteristics of orientalism is that the 'West' defines itself through the 'image of the East', which it uses as an antithesis (Said, 2013 [1978]: 12). In this context, I categorize the eastern images that form the basis for military theorists. As emphasized above, Edward Said's works (for classic orientalism) and Patric Porter's works (for military orientalism) will be basis for this part.

In the following section, I evaluated the political environment in which culture based unconventional studies emerged and the effects of this environment. The post-Cold War political environment in which ‘neo-orientalism’ and ‘new barbarism’ theses have been born, also pointed as a period in which political sphere considered and linked with security issues many times. The attempt to link political agenda with security issues, in other words the ‘securitization’ attempts (Weaver, 1995) have observed in Bush Administration’s *War Against the Terror* campaign or Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* thesis. This background creates a starting point for new perspectives which expand military issues into cultural sphere.

In the following sections, I examine the orientalist production in 4GW and COIN studies texts. Through elected texts I reveal how the theorists integrate classical arguments of military orientalism into new studies. In order to do this, texts and statements from prominent 4GW theorists and from prominent COIN/military theorists have been examined.

I concluded that many military theorists build their perspectives with an orientalist background while they attempt to understand and explain new conflicts and they reproduce many classical arguments of orientalism in contemporary context. It is also an obvious conclusion that with this re-production process they also reflect the Euro-Centric and colonial perspectives and transport orientalist legacy into future periods and studies.

1. ORIENTALISM AND MILITARY ORIENTALISM: COMPONENTS OF DICHOTOMIC CONSTRUCTION OF THE “EAST” AND THE “WEST”

It can be accepted that the study of the East as a whole was first taken by the decision of the Council in 1312 (Southern, 1962: 72; cited in Said, 2013: 59). Through the Arabic, Greek, Hebraic and Assyrian chairs established within this council, an attempt was made to learn about Eastern cultures (Ibid, 60). East was at that time a geographical East perceived by continental Europe. Greek and Hebraic cultures, which are included in today's ‘West’, were then considered to be part of the ‘East’ (Ibid, 60). In addition, there was no integrity about what and where the West is. For example, in the mediaeval period ‘for Britain the other was France, Catholic Church or others’ (Porter, 2013: 25).

However, this started to change with the rise of European imperialism. Unlike the early colonization periods of the Iberian Peninsula, imperialism, which was based on establishing a permanent and dependent system, also started a process of *recognition and shaping* in parallel with its permanence. The fact that from 1815 to 1914 the area occupied by the European-ruled colonies increased from 35% to 85% of the world (Magdoff, 1974: 893) pointed to the beginning of the construction of a holistic East. In the Eastern construction, the quest to study the

commonalities of the colonial regions and create 'collective formulas' had begun to appear as a method. Islam, which Europeans know most closely, was a convenient area for applying first formulas:

(...) Therefore it remains, (...) an important subject of study, not only for abstract reasons connected with the history of law, civilization and religion, but also for practical purposes. The more intimate the relations of Europe with the Muslim East become, the more Muslim countries fall under European suzerainty, the more important it is for us Europeans to become acquainted (Hurgronje, 1899; cited in Bousquet and Schacht, 1957: 257; also cited in Said, 2013: 268).

These collective formulas, which were applied to different parts of the East, were an imperialist practice of spreading and domination. A 'superior West' and 'inferior East' dichotomy took place at the ground of the formula. Within the scope of this dichotomy, three of the elements that Said treats as the *four dogmas* directly form the basis of *Military Orientalism*, a derivative form of orientalism:

First dogma is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior (Said, 2013: 314-5). Third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself (Said, 1985: 97). Therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically objective. A fourth dogma is that the Orient is something either to be feared (...) or to be controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible) (Said, 2013: 314-315).

Although the process of defining the East is a tool for constructing a holistic West (Said, 1994: 336), the main premise has been 'as Said argues, is always and everywhere about Western superiority' (Barkawi and Stanski, 2012: 9). At this point, Porter states that the perception of the 'inferior East', which is the subject of military orientalism, consists of four components. These are listed as 'emotive, tribal, irrational and sensuous Orient and Orientals inclined to extremism and violence' (Porter, 2013: 25).

The reflection of the social components listed above appears in the classification of 'Eastern war.' According to this perspective, Eastern war based on 'evasion, delaying and indirectness' (Keegan, 1993: 387), is different from the Western war. When this argument is examined in a deeper sense, more open orientalist codes emerge. Since the West is 'settled, creative and productive', it finds new technologies and methods and therefore prefers face-to-face warfare. The East, on the other hand, is trying to make up for this lack of 'creativity and

productivity' with the Eastern War, which it has built on 'ambush, treachery and deceit'¹ (Keegan, 2001; cited by Gregory, 2012: 164-165).

Thierry Camous, who also describes Eastern war based on the sacrificial culture created by incompetence, also defends his approach with similar statements as other military orientalists. In this approach, the 'adequate West' prefers *face-to-face war*. This approach is demonstrated as the *duel culture* at the individual level. In the face of this, there is an emphasis that the East, which is described as 'poor and hopeless', is trying to cover up its inadequacy in face-to-face conflict with self-sacrifice:

The case of kamikaze is another very explanatory element in terms of concepts that confront the status of the individual in the East and West. Westerners cannot understand the meaning of the kamikaze method that terrifies them, because it derives from the notion of another individual status. Kamikaze attacks are rare in the West except for unusual situations. (...) Christian religion and Western morality condemn suicide. The western victim, in particular, does not pursue death, prefer death only from dishonesty and vengeance. On the other hand, in the Muslim East, giving his life for war is regarded as a choice rather than a horror. Moreover, suicide is, first and foremost, a weapon of hopelessness and weak person. The death volunteer is able to reach its purpose much more effectively and with far less opportunity. So voluntary death is a weapon of the mystical, hopeless, and poor East. For the West, the death volunteer is a living symbol of a culturally frightening weapon (Camous, 2011: 439).

Another component is the 'emotive and irrational East' conceptualization. This conceptualization proposes an 'Eastern persona' who motives in the light of cultural positioning rather than rationality. In this context cultural determinants like 'blood ties', 'religious conformity', 'ethnicity', 'courage in society' creates emotive motivations for Orientals because of their central position in social life. With this aspect, war in Eastern culture is a scattered reactions that can be made for 'emotional (hence, often irrational) choices', rather than an organization made to achieve rational political goals. This perspective can exemplify by evaluations on motivations of participation to war:

(...) the death in battle of a Pashtun guerrilla invokes an obligation of revenge among all his male relatives, making the killing of a Taliban guerrilla an act of insurgent multiplication, not subtraction (Johnson and Mason, 2007: 80; cited by Porter, 2013: 152).

¹ Derek Gregory was emphasizing that Keegan expresses his ideas in his article on the first armed Predator mission over Kabul and Kandahar. Considering that drone technology can be accepted as the opposite of face-to-face war, the controversy becomes more visible.

Another component surrounding this emotive-irrational Oriental is the 'tribal Oriental'. In the tribal Oriental component, images of 'passive and undecided Oriental', 'emotional-irrational (and therefore) self-sacrificing Oriental' and 'Oriental, who need a leader since the prophet' are intertwined. Johnson and Mason's evaluation on the Taliban exemplify this perspective as well. Their assessment claimed that the focus of the struggle against Taliban should be on their leader Mullah Omar, because the charisma and legitimacy created by the 'person wearing the cloak of the prophet' can't pass to someone else (Ibid, 151). Although it will be observed in the future how wrong it is,² it is a good example to reveal the codes. Said emphasizes that this is an orientalist tradition emphasized especially for Islamic societies. The basis of his emphasis is his quote from Grunebaum. Grunebaum states that 'Islam absolutely and in all cases refuses to see man as the judge or measure of things (...) and is content with psychological truth' (Von Grunebaum, 1964: 261). Said argues that as a result of this assumption, perception of a passive Oriental individual who acts in the direction of the tribe/leader has been reached (Said, 2013: 311).

The components explained above created a basis for future orientalist production processes. However, this re-production process was not constructed in a free environment. The appearance of neo-orientalism and new barbarism concepts provided a general framework for military theorists. Thus, this period should be examined first.

2. FROM CLASSICAL ORIENTALISM TO NEO-ORIENTALISM: OBSERVING THE TRANSFORMATION

The beginning of the post-Second World War period also contained the decolonization process. In addition to that, the Cold War period transformed the East-West distinction into an ideological one. In such an environment, classical orientalist perspectives and practices based on explicit racism and colonialism seemed to dissolve gradually. Two factors were influential in this: decolonization and the assumption of the global regulatory role by the United States, which lacked an imperial past. However, the continuity of Euro-centric logic, coupled with the tendency of the US to intervene to prevent a potential 'domino effect'³ of British and French colonial legacies during the Cold War, led to the inclusion of

² After the death of Mullah Omar, the Taliban leadership continued, increased its power, and eventually retake the Afghanistan government. During the twenty-year process, the leadership first passed to Akhtar Mansur, and after he was killed in a drone attack, the leadership passed to Hibetullah Akhundzade.

³ The approach, developed by President Eisenhower of the U.S., argues that following the revolution in China, the transition to communism by another country in Asia would spread to its neighboring countries, eventually leading to the spread of communism throughout Asia, and thus advocating for the intervention of the United States at the beginning of the process to prevent such outcomes.

colonial logic alongside Euro-centric logic. While striving to distance itself from the colonial legacy, this approach, which eclectically incorporates concepts ingrained in orientalist discourse such as ‘winning hearts and minds,’ (Hunt, 2010: 36) paved the way for the development of a more implicit form of neo-Orientalism rather than employing classical orientalism outright (Hunt, 2010: 35-66).

The neo-orientalist discourse in the US primarily manifested itself in the exoticization and stereotyping of Asia as a new production of traditional orientalism in cultural products (Klein, 2003). However, its breakthrough came with the U.S. intervention in the Vietnam War inherited from France and the subsequent era of ‘proxy wars.’⁴ Positioned as the ‘leader of the democratic world’, the U.S. positioned itself against ‘other totalitarian regimes seeking to impose singularity on the world after fascism.’⁵ Such positioning attributed inadequacy to societies experiencing struggles or challenges in the process of state-building after decolonization, implicitly reproducing the orientalist discourse that, like in the imperial era, explicitly attributed to them the role of ‘bearer of superior values and governance.’⁶ The discourse that attributed the role of leader of democracies to the United States against undemocratic regimes during the Cold War will be reproduced (as discussed below) with the “Clash of Civilizations” thesis in the post-Cold War era (Huntington, 1993: 22-49). This process of reproduction facilitates observing the continuity of classical orientalist discourse in the production of neo-orientalist discourse.

The factor that facilitated the development of the emerging new Orientalist discourse in Asia was the rediscovery of a cultural understanding of Islam through the crises in the Middle East. The balance between Cold War blocks established with ‘Détente period’ in the 1970s, brought about geopolitical issues, rather than ideological ones. Many of these new issues occurred in Middle East region and most of them perceived with their ‘Islam’ connection (Samiei, 2010: 1148). This trend continued with the end of the Cold-War. Especially, with the 9/11 Attacks

⁴ Proxy Wars refer to conflicts that occurred within the general framework of the Cold War, where the two leaders of the Cold War supported local forces instead of engaging in direct conflict, amidst the shadow of the possibility of a nuclear Third World War. These conflicts ranged from low-intensity confrontations to civil wars, and they were conducted through local proxies.

⁵ Huntington expressed this clearly in his work titled ‘The Erosion of American National Interests’: “From the start, Americans have constructed their creedal identity in contrast to an undesirable *other*. (...) Until the end of the nineteenth century, the United States defined itself in opposition to Europe. (...) The United States, in contrast, was the future: progressive, free, equal, republican. In the twentieth century, the United States (...) saw itself as the leader of European-American civilization against upstart challengers to that civilization, imperial and then Nazi Germany. (...) After World War II the United States defined itself as the leader of the democratic free world against the Soviet Union and world communism. (...) Given the domestic forces pushing toward heterogeneity, diversity, multiculturalism, and ethnic and racial division, however, the United States, perhaps more than most countries, may need an opposing other to maintain its unity” (Huntington, 1997: 25-29).

⁶ I would like to express my gratitude to the reviewer for her/his reminders and guidance.

and the appearance of Al-Qaida as a global terrorist organization, a ‘cultural East’ has re-discovered. Taking the publication year of Said’s *Orientalism* as a milestone, Samiei lists these issues since 1978 as below:

The Islamic Revolution in Iran, then the hostage crisis of US diplomats in Tehran; the unresolved Palestinian question and the use of Islam as the main force of resistance in the course of *Intifadas*; the victorious resistance of Arab-Afghan Mujahedin over the former superpower’s occupation; the Rushdie affair; an increasing Islamic resurgence world-wide; acts of terror in the name of Islam, particularly noticeable in 9/11 and subsequent terrorist operations in the West and the way the West responded them (Samiei, 2010: 1150-1151).

Today many other cases can be added to the list. Examples like African conflicts and civil wars in post-Cold War period, Lockerbie Bombing⁷, Charlie Hebdo shooting⁸, Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy⁹, Syrian civil war, ISIS and migration waves, Libyan civil war and NATO intervention started to use as justifications for the allegations that ‘non-Western’ cultures are tended to use violence for projecting their political agenda. These orientalist argumentations swiftly followed by ‘new barbarism’ theses (Tuastad, 2003: 591-7). However, classical orientalist allegations could not be used easily because of the imperial legacy. Thus, a few political science studies played a crucial role to create a basis for ‘neo-orientalist’ perspective.

Firstly, as an *Early Bird*, Raphael Patai’s *The Arab Mind* opened the way for neo-orientalist arguments (Patai, 1973). This study, which ‘many considered the Bible of neocons’ (Spencer, 2013: 159), re-constructed classical orientalist theses, like Arabs are resistant to industrialization and democratization. Patai’s way to explain Arab’s resistance was based on cultural and mental configurations (Tuastad, 2003: 592). In the ‘The Islamic Component of The Arab Personality’ chapter (Patai, 1973: 152-165), he also argues ‘Islam connection’ to neo-Orientalist perspective. With the decline of Arab nationalism at the final decades of Cold War and rise of Islamic organizations globally, ‘cultural Islam’ would be on focus and was connected with *civilizations* perspective in post-Cold War period.

The greatest expansion of ‘cultural Islam’ perspective occurred after Samuel Huntington’s disputatious thesis, the *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington, 1993).

⁷ The Lockerbie bombing occurred on December 21, 1988, when a bomb exploded on a passenger plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 people.

⁸ The Charlie Hebdo shooting refers to the January 2015 terrorist attack on the offices of the French satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris, carried out by Islamist extremists in response to the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

⁹ The Jyllands-Posten cartoon controversy involved the publication of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, sparking widespread protests from Muslim communities worldwide due to perceived disrespect towards Islam.

Defining the civilizations as the broadest cultural identity,¹⁰ he proposed nine civilizations. Starting with the effort to define US identity by identifying the other,¹¹ Huntington reaches to the point of ‘The West versus The Rest’ (Ibid, 39). With the ‘Rest’, Huntington refers to an Islamic-Confucian connection, which will transform into ‘Islam’ to a large extent, especially after the September 11 attacks. This environment has led to the appearance of the new barbarism perspective.

Huntington’s the West versus the Rest approach crystalized with a new barbarism perspective, which proposes a dichotomy between the free *world* based on Western values and the *barbaric world* against it (Khalid, 2017: 120). Robert Kaplan played a crucial role in crystallization of the new barbarism thesis. He defines the contemporary conflicts as ‘a struggle between civilization and primitivism, between the educated few and uneducated millions whose borders are not those of nation states but those of culture and tribe’ (Kaplan, 2000: 26). This perspective echoed explicitly in neo-orientalists, like Daniel Pipes, who expresses that ‘Muslim countries have the most terrorists and the fewest democracies in the world’ (quoted in Tuastad, 2003: 594) and implicitly in former US President George W. Bush’s statements, in which he identified the post-September 11 operations as *crusades* (The Wall Street Journal, 2001).

The Bush Administration’s ambiguous and open-ended *War on Terror* concept embodied the new barbarism theories and shaped the framework for many military theories in a neo-orientalist ground. As a result of this process, many military theorists integrated orientalist perspective into their studies. To observe how they integrated the orientalist perspective; it is better to examine the selected texts and statements.

3. REINVENTING THE CULTURE IN MILITARY STUDIES: FOURTH GENERATION WARFARE

The Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) approach was shaped in regular brainstorming by a group of mid-level military officers (Echevarria II, 2005: 5) and published as an article (Lind et al., 1989). After the effect of the original article, many other military theorists contributed to the approach. For example, Martin van Creveld extended his book on the history of strategy (Van Creveld, 2015), which he started with Sun Tzu, to William Lind and contributed to Lind's books

¹⁰ Huntington defines ‘civilizations’ as stated below: ‘What do we mean when we talk of a civilization? A civilization is a cultural entity. Villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity. (...) A civilization thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have sort of that distinguishes humans from other species. (...) People have levels of identity (...) The civilization to which he belongs is the broadest level of identification with which he intensely identifies’ (Huntington, 1993: 23-24).

¹¹ Please see footnote 5.

by writing extensive forewords (see Lind, 2014). Counterinsurgency writer David Kilcullen has also expanded his approach to include some of the highlights of the fourth generation warfare (Kilcullen, 2006). As being the first study focusing on 'Eastern culture' in post-Cold War conflicts, 4GW approach played a turning point role by the reproduction of orientalism.

4GW studies argued that the fourth generation of warfare represents a break from the former three generations that were based on West-based understanding and organization of war. It is argued that all of the first three generations of modern warfare started with an innovation in war strategies. Subsequently, it is defended that the last generation of warfare started with a cultural shift in warfare, not with a strategic shift (Lind et al., 1989). However, the cultural shift was not identified with only the hybrid forms of warriors, tactics, instruments, organization, but it is also identified with the assumption that these hybrid forms are the outputs of Eastern War culture. This distinguishes 4GW studies from other studies which analyze the new conflicts as the method of the 'weak'.

The first element affecting 4GW approach can be found in the debate about whether there was a break in war technology with the 1990s. Lind's early criticism towards the 'revolution in military affairs' (RMA),¹² which emerged in the 1980s with the argument to 'disperse the fog of war' (Porter, 2013: 7), was shaped as 4GW in the following decade (Lind, 1985). The fact that the RMA could not disperse the fog of war due to the security environment in the post-Cold War period, made the 4GW approach as one of the prominent explanations.

The second element affecting the 4GW approach is Lind's conservative political perspective. One of the intense debates among American conservatives after the Cold War was shaped over the question of how to preserve American identity in the absence of a common enemy. Lind answered this question, which can be summarized with Huntington's words, 'how do we know who we are if we do not know who we are against' (Huntington, 1994: 128) in his article titled *Defending Western Culture*, that culture can be a solution:

In foreign policy, conservatives also need a new agenda. Anticommunism provided the basis of the old agenda. (...) Culture might provide the basis for a new conservative foreign policy (Lind, 1991: 40). (...) Africa, Asia, India, and the Islamic

¹² Although the RMA first began to be discussed in the USSR, it found its theoretical evaluation in the US in the late 1980s. The term is first referred to as the *military technical revolution*, in the work carried out under the coordination of the Net Assessment Office (ONA), which is affiliated with the US Department of Defense (Friedman, 2017: 390). It was subsequently transformed into the term *revolution in military affairs* by Krepinevic, who made the first definition, as 'transformations to provide a dramatic increase in military effectiveness' to include 'not only the technical fields, but also the operations and organizations that must be organized according to these technical fields' (Krepinevic, 1994: 30).

world are now players in what was previously a Western tournament. These new players are not merely regions or collections of nations; they are cultures (Ibid, 44). (...) It is too soon to determine which cultures may prove to be dangerous opponents to the West (Ibid, 47).

Lind's culture-based perspective created a ground similar to Huntington's *the West versus the Rest* approach and also affected 4GW approach to be integrated with neo-orientalist codes. In addition, parallel to the Huntington's emphasize to the Islam-Confucian connection, Lind's Eastern War focus crystalize with Islam emphasize:

Fourth generation war is also marked by a return to a World of cultures, not merely states, in conflict. We now find ourselves facing the Christian West's oldest and most steadfast opponent, Islam (Lind, 2004: 13).

As a result of the elements which contribute to Lind's culture-based warfare analysis, the weak embodied with Eastern societies and the warfare strategies of the weak embodied with Eastern war. The transformation of Lind's description of Eastern warfare also reveals the tight relationship between neo-barbarism approaches and 4GW. In his first article, Lind exemplify the Eastern warfare with *judo*, a Japanese combat technique based on using the weight of his opponent against him (Lind et al., 1989: 25). In parallel with Said's assessment that 'the East for the USA has long been Japan and China and this has begun to transform into Islam' (Said, 2013: 11), Lind's metaphor of judo will not be used after 2001. Therefore, the Eastern war turned its focus to traditional orientalist codes and Islam after September 11 attacks. Edward Said expressed in 1978, 'what is hidden behind all these images is the threat of jihad. As a result, it is the fear that Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world' (Said, 2013: 300). It would not be wrong to say that it constitutes a new example to be given to Said's criticism.

The Islam emphasize in 4GW studies also distinguishes the 4GW from other studies, which defend that there is a constant Eastern war culture throughout the history. To take Cassidy's work as an example (Cassidy, 2006), he tries to explain Eastern war in a historical line extending from Sun-Tzu to Mao Tze-Tsung and by connecting with the philosophical background (Cassidy, 2006: 3). Thus, an intellectual and historical integrity is provided in his work. Moreover, this intellectual and historical unity is also present in military orientalists who argue that 'there has been no change in Islamic warfare since ancient times and the Middle Ages' (Hashim, 2019: 44). However, in the 4GW studies, there is no scientific comparison and output to reveal whether the rise of non-traditional conflict types is due to war culture or power asymmetry.

The orientalist assumption based on the assumption that the East tries to balance productive West's war technologies with sacrificing the people also take place in 4GW studies:

Seldom do Asians fall into mindless *Materialschlacht* or 'body counts'; and while Oriental armies often can (and have) taken many casualties, their tactics at the small-unit infantry level are often cleverly designed to spare their own men's lives in the face of massive Western firepower (Lind, 2001; cited by Porter, 2013: 12).

Thomas Hammes, another prominent 4GW theorist, goes one step beyond Lind and defines 4GW as an output of 'information society' (Hammes, 2006). In this context, he describes the twenty-first century war from a neo-orientalist perspective. He considers terrorism as the strategizing of the culture of sacrifice with the possibilities of the information age. In this context, he argues that sacrificing children and women is an Eastern tactic, not one of the radical tactics of the weak. In his words there is no direct engagement with the East, however he uses the classic orientalist dichotomy while he defines 'his side' as not American soldiers or COIN forces, but as 'Western soldiers'.

These societies have learned that pushing women and children to the front, even in close combat, will often neutralize the superior firepower of Western soldiers. (...) Further, woman and children at the front show that the entire society has mobilized against a perceived threat to its livelihood, territory or customs. (...) warrior societies have learned that Western soldiers have trouble dealing with large numbers of women and children –and have added them as a tactical tool (Hammes, 2006: 42-43).

From the perspective of orientalism, Hammes' remarks on the culture of sacrifice are like an echo of Camous' aforementioned statements. However, Hammes highlights the suicide attacks by network-based, al-Qaeda-like groups as the ultimate strategizing of this sacrifice culture in information societies. Parallel to Lind, he considers these tactics not the way of the weak, but the way of the weak East. Similar argumentations would be produced by many COIN theorists and practitioners. Thus, it will be useful to examine selected statements and texts of COIN experts.

4. WINNING (EMOTIVE) HEARTS AND (IRRATIONAL) MINDS: COIN STUDIES IN TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

Although insurgency and counterinsurgency as practical applications are seen even in pre-modern periods¹³ and the number of studies examining these

¹³ According to an observation on the struggle in Wales in the 12th century, at the time when an exceptionally asymmetric struggle was conducted in the east, would give an idea on this issue: *The light-armed people, based on their mobility rather than their forces, do not fight to conquer the battlefield. (...)*

applications from the first periods of history to the present has increased (Sheldon, 2020: 931-932), counterinsurgency studies started to be developed as a result of the uprisings in the colonies of countries such as Britain, France and the Netherlands in the twentieth century (Marston and Malkasian, 2008: 9). Pioneering studies have drawn a framework especially for decolonization period conflicts. The fact that one side is a non-state actor in the conflicts of the decolonization process and that an unconventional type of conflict is carried out has made *irregular warfare* studies, the first literature focusing on this new type of warfare, come to the fore (Kitzen, 2020: 8).

The blurring of the distinction between civil and combatant played a role in the emergence of COIN studies. In this context, the ‘winning hearts and minds’¹⁴ concept (Thompson, 1966: 84), was developed by the colonial high-level officials of Britain. This concept focuses on the inadequacy of security measures and aims to eliminate the civil-military blur, to prevent civilians from becoming combatants, to cut the sources of the uprising, to find a solution in the political sphere. This new approach, which focuses on the political and psychological gain of the mass beyond the war, has largely diverged from the irregular warfare approach. This concept reinvented in Vietnam War process by Kennedy as emphasized above, and even the ‘winning hearts and minds’ concept used to integrate the COIN approach to US strategy (Hunt, 2010: 36). With the emergence of a similar structure and similar conflicts after the Cold War, and especially after the post 9/11 wars, COIN approaches have been revived, especially in the USA. This revival was also greatly influenced by the current intellectual background of the period, and this influence created an area of expansion for neo-orientalist assumptions.

The first effect of culture-based COIN strategies can be observed in COIN Manual of the US. While the COIN Manual, one of the most important expressions of the RMA, emphasized the critical role of new military technologies during the 1990s, the emphasis on culture increased significantly in the 2000s. As Porter points out, ‘this manual (US Army/Marine Corps, 2006), which mentions ‘culture’ 88 times and ‘cultural’ 90 times in 282 pages marks a significant departure from the technical-organizational thrust of previous American doctrine’ (Porter, 2013: 8). This trend would continue with the embedded forms of military

They harass the enemy with ambushes and night raids. (...) Hunger, cold, or difficulties of war do not ruin their morale. It is easy to defeat them in a single battle, but it is hard to suppress their resistance in an extended battle (Gann, 1971: 3; quoted by Akad, 2015: 16-17). The original description is made by Giraldus Cambrensis in his 12th century book ‘A Description of Wales.’

¹⁴ ‘Winning hearts and minds’ described by Sir Gerald Templer, who was the commander of British Forces in Malaya Insurgency. He defines the concept as follows: *using firepower makes only twenty five percent of the job, the other seventy five percent is for winning the hearts and minds*” (Thompson, 1966: 84).

orientalism. Hammes, as introduced above, can be a proper juncture for 4GW studies and COIN studies.

Hammes constructs his theoretical background of twenty first century wars by taking social structure as basis. He considers that the new war tactics derive from sub-national or transnational structures (Hammes, 2006: 38-40). In this case, individuals are not reduced to being the components of a collective political consciousness, but to being the subjects of the clan, religion, ethnicity they belong. This perspective transforms the actors into a 'community component' acting for emotional reasons, instead of being rational and interest-based actors acting according to the political goal. In this respect, Hammes alleges that keeping violence at a manageable level is the traditional method in the basis of these societies (Ibid, 41), which he defines as *warrior societies* (Ibid, 42), and attributes the justification of war to socio-cultural motives rather than political ones. Two conclusions come from here. First, he states that violence is a necessity that creates these social structures. Thus, he reiterates, albeit embedded, the notion that irrational and emotive motives exist in Eastern warriors:

A warrior society thrives on and exists for war. (...) Consider the young clansman in Somalia. As a member of a fighting clan, he has prestige and income. (...) If he puts his weapons down, he loses that prestige and the income –and with everything else (Ibid, 41).

As it is stated above, socio-cultural motives are considered as the basis for the existence of the Somali person in the society, not as a supplementary element. Although it has been proven in COIN studies that the aim of achieving social status is an important element in participation in organizations (Pedahzur, 2008; Johnsen, 2007), this element is not considered as a part of the puzzle, but as the primary one. The same orientalist assumption based on irrational and emotive Orientals also reflects to the statement of Montgomery McFate, chief cultural anthropologist of the Human Terrain System, the culture-based COIN practice of the USA in Afghanistan:

These adversaries neither think nor act like nation states. Rather, their form of warfare, organizational structure, and motivations are determined by society and the culture from which they come. Attacks on the coalition troops in the Sunni triangle, for example, follow predictable patterns of tribal warfare: avenging the blood of relative (al tha'r), demonstrating manly courage in the battle (al-murruwwah), and upholding manly honour (el sharaf) (McFate, 2005: 43).

Hammes' second inference shows itself as an emphasis on the leader factor. As a reflection of the 'passive Easterner' image, there are evaluations that the

leaders are the decisive determinant in the decision-making process, and that influencing the leader can ensure the dissolution of the entire movement:

It will be idea-based, rather than territoriality based. The ideology will be clearly expressed as a vision by the senior leadership of the network. This vision will serve as the commander's intent for subordinate elements, guide the network's day-to-day operations, and provide the operational level linkage to the various groups' tactical actions (Ibid, 255-6).

The orientalist generalization on the COIN practices also constitutes a 'paradox' to the studies. The most important effect of orientalist generalizations has been the tendency to transform counterinsurgency approaches, which act with the understanding that each insurgency is unique (NATO, 2011: 45), into a 'general' formulation to be applied at the global level. In this respect, David Kilcullen, a prominent COIN theorist, embraces Hammes' approach as a transnational reorganization of the insurgency and adapts it to COIN studies. Hammes' approach will also be expressed by David Kilcullen -with a similar emphasis on Islam:

The war against terrorism is in fact a move against a global Islamist insurgency. For this reason, the best approach to the conflict is not the counter-terrorism but the counter-insurgency. However, the theory of classical counterinsurgency is aimed at suppressing the insurgency in one single country. (...) Therefore, we need a new paradigm in the fight against globalized insurgency (Kilcullen, 2010: 166).

As the assessment above displays, the basic assumptions of COIN may also be transformed by the influence of military orientalism. In COIN approaches 'winning hearts and minds' of individuals is at the heart. And obviously hearts and minds are distinctive and personal fields of individuals. However, through the 'orientalisation' of hearts and minds, all the Eastern societies and their individuals are put in the same box. The 'dangerous myths and dubious promise' of COIN practices (Porch, 2011: 239-257), which seeks a general formulation to 'all societies to be burdened', prevents potential unique roadmaps for issues. Moreover, globalization of COIN practices would eliminate other efforts and open the way to the approaches which perceive the post-9/11 period as the 'fourth¹⁵ global war of America' (Friedman, 2005).

5. CONCLUSION

This study argues that the reproduction of orientalist discourse in the twenty-first century includes 4GW and COIN studies and questions whether there is a continuity between the classical period orientalist discourse and the orientalist

¹⁵ Friedman lists the first three global wars as the two World Wars and Cold War.

discourse of the twenty-first century. The study structured through three components. Firstly, the basis for the comparison is established based on Edward Said's orientalist discourse and Patrick Porter's military orientalism discourse. The second component involves examining how the explicit orientalist discourse, after declining during the decolonization process, gradually re-emerged in a more implicit form. The third component focuses directly on the narratives produced by 4GW and COIN studies. Through the discourse analysis of secondary texts within the scope of the research question, the following findings were reached.

The East-West dichotomy observed in classical orientalist discourse, along with the asymmetric roles attributed to both sides, is also reproduced in twenty-first-century military studies through similar discourses. In this context, the East is once again characterized within an emotional, irrational, and prone-to-extremism persona, and the discourse maintains the continuity of the notion that a war culture based on sacrifice has emerged as a result of this 'emotional' structure. Unlike orientalism, military orientalism emphasizes the emergence of a labor-intensive military strategy as a result of the culture of sacrifice, which brings with it tactics such as ambushes and deception. It has been noted that in twenty-first-century studies, these tactics are perceived as the essence of terrorist tactics. Furthermore, it extends to the thesis of creating 'warrior societies' that fight for glory and honor rather than rational reasons, as expressed by Hammes. Another parallel aspect between the two periods is the concept of 'winning hearts and minds' being approached as a comprehensive concept applicable to all cases as a 'package'. In this regard, it is observed that it progresses in the same perspective from the British colonial period to the Vietnam War, from the proxy wars of the Cold War to the post-9/11 COIN operations.

In parallel with the findings above, continuity has been observed in the integration of the reproduction process of political orientalism behind military analyses. Beyond the attributed inferior characteristics to the East, the role of being the bearer of superior values to the West is the cornerstone of the reproduction process. In this regard, there continues to be a parallel between the discourse of the white man bearing the burden of bringing civilization during the imperial period and the discourse of countries bearing the burden of protecting democratic values. It is observed that these approaches, which maintain a Euro-centric approach as the basis for actions and develop political and then military strategies on this basis, culturally analyze the military methods of insurgent individuals and societies. In this respect, the continuity of the approach of 'the West versus the Rest,' as termed by Huntington, is observed, whether it is within the discourse of protecting democracy against communism or within the efforts to protect Western values in the clash of civilizations. This continuity affects military orientalism and can create a conceptual background that goes beyond the unique direction of COIN studies, advocating a global COIN strategy.

It is true that in the twenty-first century, the methods, tools and combatants of war have hybridized, and hybridization of conflicts is an observable fact beyond being a theory today. However, we do not know whether these are a method specific to Eastern societies. If this is the method of the weak, as Toft examines, this only means a temporal overlap that rebel groups within Eastern (and Southern) societies use it. Unless the opposite is proven, attributing new types of struggles to Eastern society means nothing more than the reproduction of orientalism.

In conclusion, very important findings about today's security environment are obtained thanks to the efforts of military theorists to understand the logic of the wars of the twenty-first century. However, it is also observed that these studies reproduce orientalist codes. This brings with it important problems. Because trying to analyze the war with an East-West dichotomy, rather than method of the weak, makes the solution impossible as it leaves the diagnosis of the problem incomplete. Moreover, it lays the groundwork for radicalizing groups' efforts to legitimate violence.

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