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Beyond Territorial Colonization: A Study of Orientalist Self-perceptions among Iranians*

Shaho Sabbar,¹ Saeed Mohammadi,² Zeinab Ghasemi Tari³

1. Assistant Professor of Iranian Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (shaho.sabbar@ut.ac.ir)  0000-0001-5801-7137
2. PhD Candidate of North American Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (saeed.mohammadi@ut.ac.ir)  0000-0001-9223-045X
3. Assistant Professor of American Studies, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran (Corresponding Author) (ghasemitari@ut.ac.ir)  0000-0001-8335-0230

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Abstract

While Iran was never formally colonized by Western powers, it's governing regimes before the Islamic revolution were loyal to both the East and the West; the country was therefore more or less a de facto colony of Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. One of the most pernicious consequences of such presences can be described as the "colonization of the mind," which has subtle and lasting manifestations. Using Edward Said's four major characteristics of Orientalism (i.e., binary opposition, over-generalization, fear and control, and depicting the Orient as stuck in past primitiveness), the present paper attempts to analyze the self-perception of the Iranians toward themselves to see whether the way they perceive themselves is similar to the Western discourse of the "Orient." In the first step, a number of interviews with a representative sampling of the population under investigation were conducted to develop a questionnaire. The questionnaires were then distributed and 650 responses were collected. The survey was meant to assess the four components of Orientalism as proposed by Said, among the respondents. It also contained questions about the respondents' lifestyle, their perceptions toward nationalism, and media consumption. The results reveal evidence of Orientalist self-perception among the Iranians when they compare themselves with the West.

Keywords: Iran, Orientalism, Self-Perception, Survey, The West

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1. Introduction

Understanding Iran's complex history of encounters with the West is crucial for the present research, as it sheds light on the way in which Iranians have formed varying and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards Western countries. From early interactions with European powers in the 19th century to the CIA-led coup in 1953 and the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranians' view toward the West has ranged from admiration for Western values to resentment towards perceived interference in their domestic affairs. A brief overview of this history can provide a deeper understanding of the complex perspectives of the Iranians towards the West and the way in which these attitudes continue to evolve in the present day.

In Persian language and literature, the term “Farang” or “Farangestan” has been used to represent the concept of the West or Occident. Initially in the 15th century, Farang was associated with France, but over time, it became a generic term to refer to the entire Western world (Boroujerdi, 1996). Throughout history, Iranians have had different views about the West, depending on the country in question.

Iran's contact with the West dates back to ancient times. However, it was during the 19th and 20th centuries that Iran's interactions with the West began to have a significant impact on its society and politics. During the nineteenth century, Russia and Britain had imperial interests in Iran: Russia had long been interested in expanding its influence in the region, and in 1828, Iran was forced to sign the Treaty of Turkmenchay, which ceded a significant part of the territory to the Russians (Andreeva, 2007). This treaty marked the beginning of a long period of Russian interference in Iranian affairs.

Britain also had interests in Iran, particularly in its oil resources. In 1901, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company _later renamed British Petroleum_ was established, giving Britain a significant stake in Iran's oil industry (Martin, 2009, p. 80). However, Britain's influence in Iran was challenged by Germany, which sought to establish its own economic and political foothold in the region. Germany's efforts to gain influence in Iran were largely unsuccessful, but they did contribute to a growing sense of nationalism and anti-foreign sentiment among Iranians. This sentiment would later fuel the Constitutional Revolution and other movements for independence and self-determination. The Iranian viewed this movement as a way to resist foreign domination. However, the movement was ultimately unsuccessful, and Iran remained under the influence of foreign powers.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the United States became increasingly popular among Iranians, who saw the United States as a model for progress and development (Ghazvinian, 2021). However, in the mid-20th century and following the 1953 coup, which was orchestrated by the CIA and MI6, Iranians began to view the United States with suspicion and hostility. By the mid-20th century, the Shah became a key ally of the United States, which saw it as a bulwark against Soviet influence in the region. Iranian public developed more negative views toward the United States when the US government supported the Shah's regime, which contributed to the oppression and suffering of the Iranian people (Ghazvinian, 2021).

The political relations between Iran and the West have had a significant impact on the views of the Iranian public. Iranian view of the West began to shape during Shah Abbas, probably the first Iranian monarch who began to develop interactions with the

western merchants, missionaries, and ambassadors who travelled to his capital at Isfahan (Ansari, 2014, p. 198). Ansari argues that during this time, European visitors started to shape a narrative about the region which, “Not only has it shaped a Western idea of the decline of the East, but it has also impacted Iranian understanding of their own predicament” (2014, p. 196).

Since the 18th century, the concept of the West has been closely associated with modernity and development in the Iranian state of mind (Rezaei Yazdi, 2016). Ironically, the spread of European colonialism and imperialism in the region further reinforced the perception of the West as a symbol of progress and power. In the early 1800s, the Iranian government sponsored a series of Iranian students to travel to Britain in search of new scientific and technological learning, through which they acquired extensive and direct knowledge of British society and they become most influential agents of Iranian modernization in the middle Qajar era (Green, 2011, p. 809). Upon returning to Iran, they strived to bring back the latest advancements in technology and innovation to contribute to the development and progress of their home country (Green, 2011, p. 809). Moreover, Iranians’ traveling and travel writing to the West played an important role in shaping Iranians’ views toward Western countries and cultures. Nasir al-Din Shah traveled to Europe and visited Berlin, London and Paris in 1873, 1878 and 1889. His travelogues were published in Iran after his return, and “were read in court circles and by the literate elites in Iran, as well as in other Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries” (Motadel, 2011, p. 564).

During the Pahlavi Dynasty, Iranians’ interaction with the West increased significantly. In 1928, the Iranian parliament ratified a plan to send Iranians abroad to continue their education (Glöckner

et al, 2021, p. 136). With the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, new waves of emigration began (Sarfi et al., 2023). The advent of the internet and the “revolutionary role” that social media played in people’s lives (Aeini et al., 2023) allowed Iranians residing in the West to construct a narrative of living there as a utopia. By “bridging geographical divides and creating digital social networks” (Sabzali et al., 2024), cyber environments provided an opportunity for the Iranian diaspora to showcase the perceived benefits of Western lifestyle—such as freedom, prosperity, and personal growth—through their posts and stories. This portrayal has been very influential in shaping Iranians' views of the West.

Considering the historical and political context of the relationship between Iran and the West, the Iranian people have developed a complex view toward the West, as they have experienced both positive and negative interactions with Western countries throughout their history. While Iranians might admire Western culture, education, and technology, they also harbor resentment toward Western powers for their interference in Iranian politics and support for oppressive regimes.

The primary objective of this paper is to examine the way in which Iranians perceive themselves within the historical and cultural context that has shaped their attitudes towards the West. To this aim, the paper uses Edward Said’s Orientalism, as it is believed that this notion has had an important impact on the self-perception of Iranians and their perception of the West. The paper aims to provide a quantitative methodology for measuring and analyzing the influence of Orientalism on Iranian’s self-perception. The authors believe that there is a scarcity in scholarly works concerning the impact of Orientalist views on Eastern self-perception and attempt to propose a method to measure and quantify these influences.

The research comprises two stages: in the first stage, the authors conducted 12 in-depth interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds to derive measurable variables. The interview questions were based on Said's four characteristics of Orientalism, which will be discussed in detail in the theoretical section of this paper. This approach was deemed essential to assist the researchers in formulating a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with 33 statements to assess Iranians' Orientalist views. The authors then applied Computed using Cochran's method, resulting in a sample size of 650 (n=650) for a 99% confidence level.

2. Theoretical Framework

The present research delves into the influential work of Edward Said in *Orientalism*, which has left a lasting impact on how the East is represented in Western discourse and how individuals from the East perceive themselves in relation to the West. While recognizing the extensive body of scholarship on orientalism by various scholars across disciplines such as postcolonial theory, history, and cultural criticism, including (Tibawi, 1963; Said, 1978; Little, 1979; Ahmad, 1991; Sardar, 1999; Mcfie, 2002; Turner, 1978), Said's analysis remains a cornerstone for comprehending the intricate power dynamics, stereotypes, and biases embedded in Western portrayals of the East, as well as the Eastern self-perception, in a way that the publication of his book marked a paradigm shift in thinking about the relationship between the West and the non-West (Burke & Prochaska, 2007).

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978, p. 12) elaborates on the imagery construction of the "Orient" since the antiquity. Edward Said maintains that the Orientalist has divided the world into two "unequal halves" The Orient and Occident, based on an

“ontological and epistemological distinction’ (Said, 1978, p. 5). Said argues that the relationship between the “West” and the “Orient” is a relationship of power and complicated dominance and insists that knowledge is at the service of power, position, and interests (Said, 1978, p. 32). Said argues that the Orient is an imagery construction closely related to power; it is “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes” (Said, 1978, p. 1), which provides Europe with its “greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other” (Said, 1978, p. 1).

Applying Foucault's perspective on discourse regarding power/knowledge relationships (Said, 1978, p. 32), Said brings a series of diverse and distinct western texts under the heading of Orientalism. He elaborates on power relations between the “East” and the “West”, which played an important role in intensifying the misrepresentation and presuppositions surrounding the “Orient” and Orientals.

Using Foucault’s concept of discourse, Said maintains that the Orient in Orientalism is not a free subject of thought or action. In his view, because of the power of the West over the East – particularly in the shape of colonialism – constructed knowledge is used for justification of Western dominance over the East. Though the produced knowledge of the West about the East has scientific claims, the constructed Orient is almost always negative, since it depicts Orientals as backward, degenerate, sensual, and violent with a kind of biological determinism. Accordingly, Euro-American criteria and texts were considered to be an authentic measurement for the evaluation of normality and the naturalness of one side, while showing the abnormality, terror, and lack on the

other side. As Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson maintain, “Colonialism then is an operation of discourses as well as, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation” (Tiffin & Lawson, 1994, p. 3). Though Said accords a greater importance to individual actors, like Foucault, he connects the structure of thought to the workings of power (Loomba, 1998, p. 44). Although later, he slowly steered away sometimes inconsistently from what he saw as the relativist shortcomings of Foucauldian thought, which critics argued ran against meaningful resistance.

Textual attitude is another important concept that Said uses in order to explain the way in which literary works can generate knowledge in the Foucauldian sense, in which the schematic authority of a text is preferred to the disorientations of direct encounters (Said, 1978, p. 93). In Said’s view, two situations favor textual attitude. One is when a human being confronts something relatively unknown and threatening and previously distant. In such cases, people, places, and experiences can effectively be described by a text or book, “so much so that the text acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes” (Said, 1978, p. 93).

The second situation that encourages textual attitude is the appearance of success. According to Said, the success of a book for example, would encourage the reader to read more books by the same author; In addition, the author is believed to the extent that his description becomes the reader’s experience of reality. On the other hand, a book which has gained fame and success among audiences can provoke the production of a series of such books (Said, 1978, p. 95). The constructed knowledge of such texts is not easily dismissed, as expertise is attributed to them – “most

importantly such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe” (Said, 1978, p. 94); so in case of travel books, “the traveler [supposing that he really had traveled] saw what he expected to see, and reported what his audience at home had been conditioned to expect, would be interested in and diverted by” (Sardar, 1999, p. 24). The constructed image of the Orient in such texts ignores in meaningful ways in meaningful ways what native inhabitants have to say about their own history, culture, religion, and experience.

According to Said (1985, p. 325), “the modern Orient participates in its own Orientalizing”. According to Sardar (1999, p. 85), from the late 1940’s through the early 1960’s, a particular brand of scholars emerged as a new variety of indigenous Orientalism.

Simon Obendorf (2015, p. 36) maintains that self-Orientalism often emerges when two vastly contradictory impulses are present—resistance and submission “cultural self-definition in the wake of colonialism involves state-based reification of perceived essential Eastern qualities as a means of resisting Western cultural hegemony” and, simultaneously, from a need to attract Western capital.

The “Orientalized Orientals” are defined by their “acute state of intellectual bondage and total dependence on the West”. Nevzat Soguk (1993, p. 363, in Sardar, 1999, p. 86) has defined the term as:

One, who physically resides in the “East”, and sometimes in the West, yet spiritually feeds on the West. S/he announces her/himself to be “post-Oriental”, yet is a practicing member of the “Orientalising” praxis in its daily operations in the

interpenetrating realms of art, aesthetic, folklore, media, education, and so on.

Orientalized Orientals are Western creations and the result of a policy that can be traced back to the time when the British were after cultural dominance over India. In 1835, Macaulay (Moir & Zastoupil, 2000, p. 161) wrote:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.

The Orientalized Orientals, who are deeply colonized in their minds, continue the legacy of their western counterparts and look with contempt to their own culture, history and religion, which in their view are reasons for their backwardness. Mendes and Lau (2015, pp. 725-726) contend that Orientalized individuals engage in both playful and self-deprecating behavior, challenge established norms of identity, and embrace exoticism in a bold and provocative way.

Ironically, the narrations of the Orientalized Orientals are considered as authentic, as they are often regarded to be indigenous and thus insiders. On the other hand, what is represented by the Orientalized Oriental is often easily accepted as a true representation of reality, as it also fits well in the dominant Orientalist discourse. Accordingly, when the Orientalized Oriental wants to tell the story of his nation, he uses the same approach and references that are set by the western Orientalist. Thus the East portrays itself through a Western lens and the fictionalized image that the West has created. Critics suggest that indigenous image creators often adhere to Western narratives, reinforcing contrasting

views of “us versus them” the known versus the unknown, and the progressive versus the stagnant (Henderson, 2001).

In Sardar’s (1999, p. 87) words “the history and thought of the Orient was therefore learned as it had been determined, assessed and described from superior the authority of the West”. Thus the historical narration of the “Orientalized Oriental” is worlds away from the indigenous’ narration and is a continuation of Western “scholarship”.

In particular, the paper employs Said's delineation of the four key characteristics of Orientalist dogmas as a framework for designing the research’s questionnaire. By closely examining Said's conceptualization of Orientalism, the research aims to underscore the enduring relevance and importance of his perspectives and through this exploration, the study seeks to shed light on how Said's insights continue to shape discussions on cultural identity, colonial legacies, and global relations in contemporary contexts. The present paper uses Edward Said’s characteristics of Orientalism dogmas for designing its research questions, which include 1. The absolute and systematic difference between the West and the East, in which the former is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the latter, aberrant, undeveloped, and inferior. 2. The abstractions about the Orient, based on texts representing an ancient Orient, preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities (the Orient is eternally stuck in past primitiveness). 3. The Orient is uniform and monolith; 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” (over-generalization). 4. The Orient is at the bottom, either feared or controlled by pacification, research, development, or occupation (fear and control) (Said, 2003, pp. 300-301).

3. Methodology

The present study aims to examine Orientalism and Orientalist views among Iranian respondents, necessitating the development of a quantitative tool to measure the extent and impact of Orientalism. As Said and other scholars of Orientalism have largely discussed the topic in generalities, the primary objective of this research is to provide a reliable quantitative measuring tool to assess the impact of Orientalism on individuals.

The theoretical framework plays a significant role in providing a firm basis for the research and establishing its boundaries. Although Orientalism has been extensively studied, Said's characteristics need to be translated into measurable variables. Therefore, one of the main contributions of this research is to establish a reliable quantitative method to assess the impact of Orientalism on individuals. However, this task presents challenges, as the assessment is not measurable through direct, external, and objective evaluations. To develop the questionnaire, we relied on in-depth interviews with individuals who had experience living abroad and encountering foreigners.

The interview phase facilitated the extraction of variables, transforming general concepts (driven by Edward Said's Orientalism) into measurable variables. The interview questions were designed to be structured, yet open-ended, allowing interviewees to freely express their thoughts and expand on the topic. The interview process was conducted in a non-critical, balanced, and ethical manner, ensuring that interviewees understood the research's purpose, and that their responses would be treated confidentially. Both direct and indirect questions, including interpretive questions, were utilized during the interview process, with follow-up questions asked where necessary.

3. 1. Statements Extraction Process

Initially, individuals with cross-cultural experiences, particularly those living abroad, were selected for interviews. The interviews commenced by introducing the four aspects of Orientalism as outlined in Said's work: binary opposition, over-generalization, fear and control, and the portrayal of the Orient as trapped in a primitive past. The interviewees engaged in a free-flowing discussion on these key concepts, with explanations provided for each and prompting to recall personal experiences that resonated with these ideas. They were encouraged to reflect on various financial, social, political, and cultural scenarios to ensure a comprehensive exploration of their encounters.

Upon the completion of a detailed discussion on one aspect, the interviewer smoothly transitioned to the next facet of Orientalism. Following each interview, the statements derived from the conversations were meticulously reviewed to ensure that each statement encapsulated a singular idea related to Orientalism. This meticulous process involved scrutinizing the statements to avoid blending multiple points or ideas from the interviewees' shared experiences. In the final phase of this research segment, redundant, repetitive, or overly similar statements were eliminated, resulting in a refined list of 48 statements.

3. 2. Factor Analysis and Development of a Standard Test

The study commenced by creating a comprehensive questionnaire derived from in-depth interviews, resulting in an initial set of 48 inquiries. The inquiries were intended to scrutinize various aspects of the respondents' perceptions of Orientalism and its influence on their self-perception as Iranians. After administering the

questionnaires and collecting the responses, a crucial step in the research process involved subjecting the dataset to factor analysis. Factor analysis served as a pivotal tool in scrutinizing the collected data to discern underlying patterns and relationships among the inquiries. The statistical technique permits researchers to explore whether the inquiries genuinely measure distinct and meaningful variables or if there is redundancy in the dataset. By identifying clusters of inquiries that tend to gather around specific variables, factor analysis illuminates the latent constructs, influencing respondents' perceptions.

The process involved the identification and removal of questions that did not significantly contribute to capturing the nuances of Orientalist mentalities. Factor analysis played a crucial role in distilling the essence of the respondents' perspectives, ensuring that the remaining questions were relevant and representative of the underlying constructs. This refinement process is integral to enhancing the validity and reliability of the measurement tool. After conducting factor analysis, the questionnaire was streamlined from 48 to 33 questions, creating a more efficient tool for assessing Orientalist views. The questionnaire is provided in the appendix of the article. It should be noted that the questionnaire was in Persian, but since the article is published in English, the questions have been translated into English.

3. 3. Optimizing the Questionnaire

The results of the factor analysis indicated that a questionnaire consisting of 33 questions was a valid and reliable tool for measuring Orientalist mentalities among the study participants. This refined set of questions was able to capture the diverse

dimensions of Orientalism, as discussed in the theoretical framework. The optimized questionnaire provided a foundation for insightful exploration of the self-perception of Iranians and other non-Western societies. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from "totally agree" to "totally disagree", to structure responses. In addition to the 33-question Orientalism scale, the questionnaire included supplementary sections to investigate the relationship between Orientalism and factors such as sense of nationalism, media consumption, and demographic information. The demographic information section included questions on age, gender, and educational level of both the respondents and their parents. Furthermore, a question was added to explore whether the respondent or his/her family had visited Western countries and if yes, for how long, as direct exposure to Western societies may impact perceptions. To calculate the sample size, Cochran's method was employed with an interval of 5 and a margin of error of 1% ($e=0.01$). With a confidence level of 99% ($z=2.576$), the required sample size was estimated to be 650 ($n=650$).

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The study focused on individuals aged 16 and above, with 659 participants completing the online questionnaire. However, four questionnaires were excluded from data analysis as the respondents were either 15 years old or younger, or had not indicated their age. Table 1 displays the age distribution of the respondents who submitted valid questionnaires to the researchers.

Table 1. The Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
16 – 25	200	30.6	30.6
26 – 35	272	41.7	72.3
36 – 45	152	23.3	95.6
46 or older	29	4.4	100
Total Valid	653	100	
Missing	2		
Total	655	100	

Source: Authors

Of the 655 participants, 64% were female and 36% were male. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents according to their highest level of education.

Table 2. Respondents' Education Level

Education	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High-School or Lower	83	12.7	12.7
Some College or BA	317	48.4	61.1
MA or Ph.D.	255	38.9	100
Total Valid	655	100	
Missing	0		
Total	655	100	

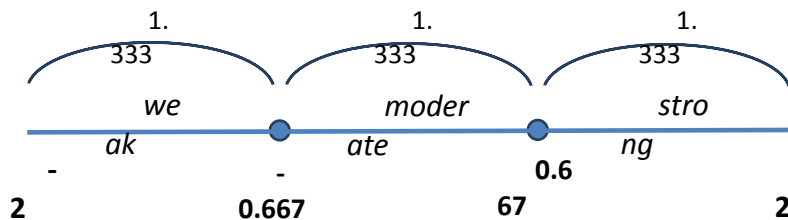
Source: Authors

4. 1. Applying Orientalism Score to the Data

As previously stated, factor analysis was employed to extract 38 questions from a larger questionnaire, which were utilized to measure respondents' Orientalist mentality. Each respondent's

Orientalism score was calculated by determining the mean score of his/her responses to the 38 questions. It is important to note that this score serves solely as a means of comparison and does not necessarily reflect an individual's thoughts and behaviors according to a universal standard. All 38 questions were presented on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from strongly disagree (-2) to strongly agree (2). Consequently, each respondent's Orientalism score would fall between -2 and 2. A low Orientalism score indicates a weak Orientalist mentality, while a high score suggests the opposite. The calculation of mean scores converts discrete values to continuous values, which must be converted back to discrete ordinal values in order to categorize respondents based on their Orientalism scores. This involves grouping scores between -2 and 2 into specific ranges and assigning labels accordingly. Chart 1 depicts the categorized scores of the three groups representing strong, moderate, and weak Orientalist mentalities. As the range between the maximum and minimum scores is 4, it is possible to group all scores into three ranges using a division of 1.333.

Chart 1. Orientalism Score



Source: Authors

The Orientalism score for each respondent (illustrated in table 3) is determined by calculating the mean score of his/her responses to

the 38 questions, which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (-2) to strongly agree (2). Based on these scores, respondents are categorized into three groups: weak Orientalist mentality (-2 to -0.667), moderate Orientalist mentality (-0.667 to 0.667), and strong Orientalist mentality (above 0.667). The minimum and maximum Orientalism scores observed in this study were -1.89 and 1.87, respectively, indicating the practical usefulness of the 38-question test. Nearly one-fifth of the respondents fell into the weak Orientalist group, while nearly one-fifth fell into the strong Orientalist group, with the remaining three-fifths falling into the moderate group. The symmetry of these categories and the absence of extremely low or high percentages further highlight the utility of the 38-question test.

Table 3. Orientalism Score

Orientalism Score	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Weak	133	20.3	20.3
Moderate	402	61.4	81.7
Strong	120	18.3	100
Total Valid	655	100	
Missing	0		
Total	655	100	

Source: Authors

4. 2. Orientalism vs. Other Beliefs and Behaviors

To comprehend the potential influence of the computed Orientalist mentality on individuals' and society's lives, we sought to investigate possible correlations between the Orientalism score and

respondents' beliefs and actions. Thus, we appended ten additional questions (illustrated in table 4) to the questionnaire, which inquired about participants' attitudes and behaviors concerning their nationality, culture, and feelings of pride or shame. Similar to the queries comprising the Orientalism score, these supplementary questions were formulated as 5-point Likert-type items.

Table 4. Additional Survey Questions on the Respondents' Attitudes and Behaviors

Q1	I am proud of the history of my country.
Q2	If I read a story on the Internet about the bravery of Iranians in the ancient wars, I feel proud.
Q3	I feel connected and attached to Iran.
Q4	If I travel abroad, I try to spend time with people of my religion.
Q5	If I travel abroad, I try to spend time with people from my country.
Q6	In a foreign country, I would proudly say I am an Iranian.
Q7	I would volunteer to fight or support the troops in a war between Iran and another country if I could not fight.
Q8	I prefer to live in a country other than mine.
Q9	I would like my citizenship to be revoked and receive the citizenship of a country in Western Europe or North America.
Q10	Because of the Iranian poets, artists and scientists, I am proud of my nationality.

Source: Authors

The aforementioned inquiries do not constitute a standardized examination of nationalism or other related concepts. Rather, they are a set of researcher-developed queries designed to evaluate the

study's Orientalism score and ascertain any significant correlations with individuals' genuine emotions and behaviors. The ensuing table displays the frequency distributions of responses to the ten questions. The total number of participants who responded to all ten questions was 655, and there were no missing responses ($n = 655$). Therefore, for conciseness, only percentages are presented and all data is consolidated into a single table (table 5) consisting of ten rows (rather than ten distinct tables).

Table 5. Frequencies of the Responses to the Additional Survey Questions

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Q1	4.6%	9.3%	18.8%	41.1%	26.3%	100%
Q2	9.0%	11.3%	25.5%	24.6%	29.6%	100%
Q3	8.5%	9.3%	22.6%	26.6%	33.0%	100%
Q4	32.5%	18.5%	28.1%	11.8%	9.2%	100 %
Q5	12.8%	20.5%	38.6%	19.1%	9.0%	100%
Q6	8.4%	7.6%	28.9%	24.9%	30.2%	100%
Q7	25.6%	11.8%	20.0%	18.9%	23.7%	100%
Q8	14.5%	11.8%	26.0%	19.1%	28.7%	100%
Q9	32.4%	16.8%	16.5%	13.0%	21.4%	100%
Q10	6.3%	7.6%	22.1%	26.3%	37.7%	100%

Source: Authors

The ten questions posed in this study have profound implications for individuals' attitudes towards their country and their actions concerning their nation. For example, the data presented in row Q9 reveals that more than a third of participants would relinquish their nationality for Western citizenship. Similarly, Q8 indicates that nearly half of the respondents would prefer to reside in a country other than their own. Examining potential correlations between participants' Orientalism score and their responses to these questions can yield several benefits. Firstly, significant associations can demonstrate the practical utility of the

Orientalism score derived from this study's 38-item questionnaire. Secondly, it can provide a deeper understanding of the participants who shared their thoughts and emotions regarding their lives as Iranians and their country.

To investigate possible correlations between participants' Orientalism score and their responses to the ten questions, we utilized SPSS. Given that both variables are ordinal, an appropriate association test is Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma Coefficient. The following tables present significant associations between variables, as identified by our data analysis. It should be noted that the paper deliberately refrained from including all tables related to all questions, the essential findings of the tables for each question is provided.

4. 3. Orientalism Score/ Q1

The results of our data analysis using Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma Coefficient revealed a statistically significant association between participants' Orientalism score and their responses to Q1, which assessed the extent to which they were proud of the history of their country. The Gamma Coefficient value was -0.266, indicating a moderately strong and inverse relationship between the two variables. This finding provides valuable insight into the data presented in the accompanying crosstab table (table 6). It is important to note that all analyses reported in this study were conducted on a sample of 655 participants, with no missing cases.

Table 6. Orientalism Score vs. Q1 Crosstab

		I am proud of the history of my country.					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
Orientalism	Weak	2.5%	5.8%	10.0%	38.3%	43.3%	100%
	Moderate	3.0%	8.2%	22.4%	44.5%	21.9%	100%
	Strong	11.3%	15.8%	15.8%	33.1%	24.1%	100%

Source: Authors

The initial row of the presented table indicates that individuals with weaker Orientalism scores exhibit a higher tendency to express pride in their country's history. Specifically, 81.6% of respondents within this category agreed or strongly agreed with the statement concerning their pride in Iran's history. In contrast, for those classified under the moderate Orientalism group, the percentage of individuals who expressed agreement or strong agreement was lower, amounting to 66.4%. The strong Orientalism group exhibited the lowest proportion of agreement or strong agreement, with only 57.2%, representing a 30% decrease compared to the weak Orientalism group. Additionally, an analysis of responses indicating disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement revealed a substantial difference between the strong and weak Orientalism groups, with the former exhibiting an approximately 330% increase in such responses. It is noteworthy that similar tables can be generated for all tested associations, although only select results are presented herein for the sake of brevity.

4. 4. Orientalism Score/Q2

The Gamma Coefficient demonstrates a statistically significant correlation between respondents' Orientalism scores and their

responses to the inquiry regarding their pride in the valor exhibited by ancient Iranians. The calculated Gamma value of -0.137 denotes an inverse relationship, signifying that individuals with greater Orientalism scores exhibit a reduced inclination to assent to their pride in the bravery of Iranians during ancient battles. Gamma values ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 (or -0.10 to -0.29) are typically regarded as indicative of moderate associations.

4. 5. Orientalism Score/ Q3

The Gamma Coefficient reveals a robust, yet indirect correlation between respondents' Orientalism Score and their responses to the inquiry regarding their sense of connection to Iran. The calculated Gamma value of -0.495 falls within the range of values typically indicative of a strong association between variables, namely, those values ranging from 0.30 to 0.99 (or -0.30 to -0.99). As evidenced in table 7, only 5% of individuals with low Orientalism scores expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with feeling connected and attached to Iran, whereas 40.6% of those with high Orientalism scores did so. This implies that respondents belonging to the high Orientalism group are approximately eight times more inclined to report a lack of connection and attachment to Iran.

Table 7. Orientalism Score vs. Q3 Crosstab

		I feel connected and attached to Iran.					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
Orientalism	Weak	2.5%	2.5%	6.7%	21.7%	66.7%	100%
	Moderate	6.0%	8.2%	28.6%	29.9%	27.4%	100%
	Strong	21.8%	18.8%	18.8%	21.1%	19.5%	100%

Source: authors

4. 6. Orientalism Score/ Q4

The Gamma Coefficient has revealed a statistically significant association between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 4, which pertains to their inclination to spend time with individuals of their religious affiliation when traveling abroad. The calculated Gamma value of -0.543 indicates a robust and indirect correlation between the two variables.

4. 7. Orientalism Score/ Q5

The Gamma Coefficient has revealed a statistically significant association between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 5, which pertains to their inclination to spend time with individuals from their country of origin when traveling abroad. The calculated Gamma value of -0.279 indicates a moderate and indirect correlation between the two variables.

4. 8. Orientalism Score/ Q6

The Gamma Coefficient has revealed a statistically significant association between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 6, which pertains to their willingness to proudly declare their nationality as Iranian when in a foreign country. The calculated Gamma value of -0.547 indicates a strong and indirect correlation between the two variables.

4. 9. Orientalism Score/ Q7

The Gamma Coefficient has revealed a statistically significant association between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 7, which pertains to their willingness to volunteer to fight or support troops in a hypothetical war between Iran and another country (illustrated in table 8). The calculated

Gamma value of -0.703 indicates a very strong and indirect correlation between the two variables.

Table 8. Orientalism Score vs. Q7 Crosstab

		In a war between Iran and another country, I would volunteer to fight or to support the troops - if I am unable to fight					Total
		strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	
Orientalism	Weak	4.2	2.5	10.0	17.5	65.8	100%
	Moderate	19.7	14.7	24.1	24.6	16.9	100%
	Strong	63.3	11.3	16.5	3.0	6.0	100%

Source: Authors

The strength of the association between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 7 is such that it would be discernible even without the assistance of the Gamma Coefficient. Specifically, among individuals with a high Orientalism score, only 9% expressed agreement or strong agreement with the notion of fighting in a hypothetical war for Iran or supporting troops in such a conflict. In contrast, this figure exceeded 83% among individuals with a low Orientalism score.

4. 10. Orientalism Score/ Q8

The Gamma Coefficient reveals a statistically significant correlation between the Orientalism score of the participants and their responses to Question 8, which pertains to their preference for residing in a country other than their own. The magnitude of the Gamma Coefficient was -0.689, indicating a robust and negative association between the two variables. This suggests that as the Orientalism score increases, the likelihood of preferring to live in a country other than one's own decreases.

4. 11. Orientalism Score/ Q9

The Gamma Coefficient reveals a statistically significant correlation between the Orientalism score of the participants and their responses to Question 9, which pertains to their desire to relinquish their citizenship and obtain citizenship in a Western European or North American country. The magnitude of the Gamma Coefficient was -0.710 , indicating a robust and negative association between the two variables. This suggests that as the Orientalism score increases, the likelihood of desiring to relinquish one's citizenship and obtain citizenship in a Western European or North American country decreases.

4. 12. Orientalism Score/ Q10

The Gamma Coefficient revealed a statistically significant correlation between respondents' Orientalism score and their responses to Question 10, which pertained to their level of national pride with regard to Iranian poets, artists, and scientists. The magnitude of the Gamma Coefficient was -0.364 , indicating a strong and negative association between the two variables. This suggests that as the Orientalism score increases, the level of national pride with regards to Iranian poets, artists, and scientists decreases.

5. Concluding Remarks

The theoretical framework of Edward Said's Orientalism has proven to be an indispensable tool in the analysis of Iranian self-perception. By exploring the complexities of cultural identity perceptions, this study has illuminated the nuanced ways in which Orientalist mentalities are manifested among Iranian respondents.

The methodology employed in this study, which incorporates both interviews and quantitative measurements, has contributed to the establishment of a practical foundation for evaluating Orientalist mentality in individuals. The 33-question test, derived from the theoretical framework and factor analysis, has effectively measured respondents' Orientalist mentalities, categorizing them into weak, moderate, and strong groups. The correlation analysis between Orientalism scores and respondents' beliefs and behaviors has yielded insightful findings. The observed relationships in key areas, such as pride in the country's history, connection to Iran, and preferences for spending time with co-nationals, indicate a significant influence of Orientalism on individuals' attitudes. This study also reveals a strong association between high Orientalism scores and reduced inclination to volunteer or support troops in a hypothetical war involving Iran, emphasizing the practical implications of Orientalist mentalities on patriotic sentiments.

Moreover, the incorporation of ten supplementary questions that examine respondents' attitudes towards their nationality and culture has contributed to our understanding of the multifaceted impact of Orientalism. Notably, a significant proportion of participants expressed a willingness to relinquish their nationality in favor of Western citizenship and a preference for residing in a country other than their own. These attitudes highlight the importance of further investigating Occidentalism and its potential reciprocal effects. Essentially, this study serves as a foundation for comprehending the intricate dynamics between Orientalism, self-perception, and national identity in various societies. Future research is expected to develop more detailed and precise measurements, specifically those that can independently evaluate any of the four aspects of Orientalism derived from theoretical works in the field.

While the sample utilized in this study may not comprehensively reflect the diverse nature of the Iranian society, it provides a valuable pilot study concentrating on orientalist sentiments among Iranian students and educated individuals. It is crucial to acknowledge that the results of this study are not intended to be universally applied to the entire population of Iran.

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Appendix

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

(Options Include Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

	Very reliable	Somewhat reliable	Somewhat unreliable	Very unreliable
A newspaper published in Iran				
A newspaper published abroad				
A website related to the Iranian government				
A website related to the US government				
A research conducted abroad				
A research conducted in Iran				
Islamic Republic TV				
A satellite TV channel				
An Iranian website				
A foreign website				
Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)				
BBC Persian				

1. I feel embarrassed about my nationality and sometimes wish I had been born in a Western country.
2. I believe that people in Western countries are generally more trustworthy than those in Eastern countries.
3. I think Iran will become a highly developed country in the future.
4. If you receive an interesting article through Telegram or Facebook, how credible and reliable is it if the source is one of the following?

5. Religious orientation is perceived to have contributed to the backwardness of Eastern countries.
6. Eastern countries have unsuccessful economies.
7. Eastern countries do not have significant scientific achievements.
8. Eastern countries often view the West as a model and aspire to emulate its ideals.
9. Eastern countries are perceived to be inherently chaotic, messy, and disorderly.
10. Eastern countries have historically been involved in generating war and insecurity.
11. In Eastern countries, individuals often lack personal and civil freedoms, and there is a need for someone to restore these liberties to them.
12. In Eastern countries, autocratic and dictatorial governments hold power, and it is necessary to remove these governments with foreign assistance.
13. Eastern countries are perceived to be morally and culturally more backward compared to western countries.
14. Eastern countries are often considered to be less influential than western countries in the field of art.
15. In Eastern countries, there is often a lack of attention given to the law by the populace.
16. In Eastern countries, rationality is not always dominant in political and social systems.
17. In Eastern countries, human values (like justice, responsibility, respect, equal rights, fairness, and freedom) are often overlooked.
18. Eastern countries are frequently perceived as having a status in the world that is considered unusual, abnormal, and irregular.
19. In Eastern countries, there is often limited focus on moral values (such as being law-abiding, good-natured, displaying good behavior, demonstrating benevolence, tolerance, politeness, altruism, keeping promises, trustworthiness, and patience.)

20. In which of the following areas are eastern countries more backward than western countries? (You can choose one or more)
 - Economy
 - Culture
 - Science
 - Art
 - Moral values (Like being law-abiding and Altruism)
 - all of them
 - none of them
21. In Eastern countries, there are common characteristics, both positive and negative, shared by most of them (for example, Eastern people are warmongers, or Eastern people are hospitable).
22. Unpredictability and irrational political behavior are considered characteristic features of Eastern countries.
23. Eastern countries share many cultural similarities, to the extent that there exists a concept known as "Middle Eastern culture" or "Oriental culture."
24. The political systems in Eastern countries exhibit many similarities, leading some to categorize them under one classification.
25. The populations of Eastern countries display significant differences from one another, making it challenging to make blanket generalizations about them as a whole.
26. Eastern countries are often perceived as potential threats to global peace and security due to their political instability.
27. In Eastern countries lacking a robust central government, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and Iraq, the presence of foreign military forces is deemed necessary to stabilize the situation and uphold global security.
28. Eastern countries, due to their perceived backwardness in various fields, often require education and assistance from more advanced and successful Western nations.

29. Eastern countries often require the assistance and cooperation of Western nations to address their inherent irregularity and chaos.
30. In order to provide effective assistance to Eastern countries, Western nations should undertake research and studies focused on them.
31. Based on the typical characteristics associated with Eastern countries, it is reasonable to consider Iran as an Eastern country.
32. Iranian culture shares closer affinities with Eastern countries than with Western countries.
33. . In Western countries, rationality is always dominant in political and social systems.
34. Western countries are more developed and advanced than Eastern countries in which of the following fields? (You can choose one or more)
 - Economy
 - Culture
 - Science
 - Art
 - Moral values (Like being law-abiding and Altruism)
 - all of them
 - none of them
35. The culture of Western countries, including traits such as order, punctuality, honesty, personal and social ethics, lifestyle, respect for privacy, and work ethic, is often more advanced and superior compared to the culture of Eastern countries.
36. Humanity and altruism are believed to be more prevalent in Western countries compared to Eastern countries.
37. If I were to choose between Western culture and my own culture:
 - a. I would definitely choose Western culture.
 - b. I would definitely choose my own culture.
 - c. Both have the same value to me.
38. The character and status of women are generally more respected in Western countries compared to Eastern countries.

39. Women in Western countries typically have greater opportunities in society compared to those in Eastern countries.
40. In Western countries, human rights are generally respected to a greater extent than in Eastern countries.
41. I have more trust in books written by Western researchers about the history of Iran than in those written by Iranian researchers.
42. The people of Eastern countries are stuck in the early era of Islam (dating back 1400 years ago.)
43. The people of Eastern countries have constructed cities and reside in urban areas, but they have not fully undergone urbanization.
44. The people of Eastern countries are not considered modern in terms of characteristics such as rationalism, private economy, science and industry, ethics, and social interactions.
45. Today, the treatment of women in Eastern societies is often similar to that of a few hundred years ago.
46. The presence of the issue of polygamy in Eastern societies is viewed as an indication of the backwardness of these societies.
47. Even with Western political structures such as republics or constitutional monarchies, Eastern countries are still entrenched in old despotisms due to the lack of genuine political development.
48. Even with numerous welfare amenities, Eastern societies are still often regarded as backward.