CLASSICAL ARABIC AND ISLAMIC CULTURAL STUDIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES: REFLECTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Abdur-Rahman Olalekan Olayiwola
Department of Political Science
Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria
E-mail: nusramurana@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

The efficacious utility of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in the Social Sciences, is indubitable. It makes us to realize that society is an all-inclusive entity, a composite system whose component parts (or sub-systems) are closely related. The utilization of Classical Arabic Language in international relations, international politics, foreign policies and World Congresses of United Nations, Regional Organisations and Non-Governmental Agencies means that Classical Arabic is now equally an important Linguistic Communicative International Language like English and French. Also, *intifada*, an Arabic word meaning 'a shaking off' has entered international political debate in which many social scientists and Human Rights Lawyers have condemned Israel for using its heavy military equipment, tanks, helicopters, missiles and aircrafts as well as snipers to destroy towns, houses, people and properties including lives of men, women and children in the Middle East. In the same vein, the mantra, there is no separation between religion and politics in Islam. *Islam din wa dawla* (Islam is religion and state) is not a recent vintage in the multidisciplinary analysis, data collection and comparative methodological approach in the study of man as a social being, as a member of society; the concern with moral ends of the state as well as the legal, economic, social, political and formal structures of government, the origins of the state, nationally and internationally; processes, institutions and groups, the relationships among them and the behavioural revolution.

Of what relevance are Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies to Social Sciences? What epistemological assistance can Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies offer in explaining the 'Arab Spring Experience', the dramatic uprisings, rebellions and revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)? What purpose do Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies serve in Social Scientific researches and can they be put to the betterment of man and society? How can the current global problems be solved through Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies? How adequate is the view that as long as United State of America, Europe, and the rest of the world including Muslim and Arab countries which emulate the West-stick to their man-made laws, they will always be on the brink of chaos, hullabaloo and instability? Is there any iota of truth in the contention that Arabic language and Islamic culture are difficult and complex? Is it also true that the study of Middle East Social Sciences and Politics in particular, is embedded in the historical attitude of American and European Culture toward Islam and Arabism? Does the Middle East's presumed " exceptionalism" imply the disutility of " civil society" as a tool for socio-political analysis? How could political participation be inspired by *Shura* (consultation) principles? Could elections be linked to *ijm'a* or consensus? Is not *mubaya* (act of allegiance) a different form of social contract? Cannot government

accountability to public opinion be facilitated through the propagation and institutionalization of *Ijtihad* (the practice of independent judgement)? This paper attempts to provide some answers. The paper frowns at the contention that examining the utility of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences is tantamount to area studies which are labeled as obscurantist, racist, and antithetical to the very values underlying social scientific analysis. The paper sees such a contention as parochial, anecdotal, Eurocentric and non-comparative. The paper contends that area studies including Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies are synonymous with in-depth familiarity with the countries that scholars should be studying. The paper focuses on how this field can advance alongside other social science fields, while avoiding a no-win situation in which the mere recognition that cultural factors matter labels specialists as anti-scientific heretics by their more dogmatic colleagues. The paper concludes that although area studies, per se should not be abandoned, the conceptual horse should be put in front of the areal cart so that scholarly investigation is hung on a stronger intellectual reed than the mere fact that the fields and regions involved are interesting. Finally, the paper contends that the field of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences should become truly interdisciplinary not only in their melding of political science and area studies, but also by recognition of the potential artificiality of political science as a discretized field of investigation when the growth of true social science should be our goal. It is imperative that this field be permitted to flourish alongside other political, economic, communication, legal, sociological, psychological, historical, and social science subfields. Should this not evolve, both the field of Classical Arabic, Islamic Cultural Studies and Political Science in general, and Social Sciences and Middle East Politics in particular, will be poorer for it.

INTRODUCTION

In view of the down-turn in economies of the Third World as manifested in dwindling employment opportunities, it may be desirable to repackage the curricular of Arabic and Islamic Studies in a way that would open students to career opportunities outside teaching and the civil service. (Abdul-Rahmon, 2008). The quotation above borrowed from Professor Abdul-Ramon vividly complements and supplements this paper's contention for an urgent need to ensure that Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies are repackaged to make them critical for the development of interdisciplinary studies in the academia all around the world. This paper therefore, focuses attention on the efficacious utility of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in the Social Sciences. It takes a distinguishable approach of interdisciplinary nature, which is seen as a most sensible way to broaden and enrich the study of Classical Arabic, Islamic Cultural and Social Scientific Studies. Equally and not unexpectedly, the paper employs a multidisciplinary comparative methodological analysis in its pursuits, in which excellent use is made of Arabists, Islamists, Linguists, Social Scientists, Political Scientists, Communicators, Lawyers, Social Psychologists, Geographers, Demographers, Sociologists, Economists, Historians, Philosophers, and others whose training and knowledge are pertinent as they are all interested in the study of man as a social being and as a member of society and the study of the society itself. What new directions could be suggested in the learning and teaching of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the world among a host of other

regions and continents? Of what use are Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences? This paper attempts some answers. Should Arabists, Islamists and Social Scientists be familiar, for instance, with the historical method of investigation which is of particular interest to scholars because of the universality of its application? Should the Arabists and Islamists be familiar with structural-functionalism and the universality of functions in all political systems? How useful to Arabists and Islamists are the social scientists theoretical and methodological tools in data gathering, data analysis, explanation and prediction? Are there any distinctive methodologies for studying the society, politics, economy, culture, language, history, behaviour etc of Arabs and Muslims of particular areas such as Africa and the Middle East? How can the field of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences be truly become interdisciplinary in their melding of Political Science and Area Studies among a host of others? This paper attempts some answers.

The Importance of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences
The ties of Arabic Language to the religion of Islam is doubtless stronger than that of Latin to Christianity, but whereas the latter language has all put passed into disuse, the dynamism and sustenance of Arabic has been assured by its extensive use in areas other than religion, viz, in commerce, diplomacy, broadcasting and international relations. (Sanni,2005). Professor Sanni's assertion is a brilliant testimony to the paramount importance of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences. The Arab's impact on world civilisation has continued unabated. In the same vein, attempts have been made and are still being made to reawaken an awareness of the importance of the Arabic-Islamic inheritance for western and other cultures of the world. The primary purpose of promoting understanding of Islam, and of the Muslims is being vigorously pursued. In many English-speaking, Swahili-speaking, French-speaking, German-speaking, Arabic-speaking Yoruba-speaking, Hausa speaking and a host of other linguistic components parts of the world, discussions have been held and documented on the culture, language, history, tradition and institutions of the Arabs, the Muslims in the West, in the East and in those lands of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Near, Middle, and Far East influenced by Arabic and Islamic language, religion and way of life. Such documentations have focused on many issues including: *Religion and tradition in a changing society, *Origins, forms and functions of the law; *Political and Social forms of the religious tasks and *Muslims and Christians and their common responsibility, to mention just a few. (Dobers and Khoury(ed), 1982). Classical Arabic is of paramount importance in Social Sciences and in the world because of the following:

(1)   Arabic opens the way to centuries of history, science, literature and culture;
(2)   Arabic opens the way to a body of authentic material and a collection of manuscripts that cover all fields of study including the Qur'an, and Islamic writings and thoughts.
(3)   Arabic opens the way to the Middle East and provides access to the varied market of many countries and billions of Arabs across the globe;
(4)   Arabic provides us the tools to build bridges with communities and groups that are in the heart of current affairs, and communicate for creating a more peaceful and prosperous world.

(5)   Arabic has many benefits, it is a beautiful language with a rich heritage of literature, scholarly work and ancient culture;

(6)   Arabic was adopted by the United Nations as one of its six official languages in 1974;

(7)   Arabic is considered by the United States government as one of the critical languages for Americans to learn.

(8)   The governments of many countries counties and of Palestine list Arabic as their dominant language;

(9)   Arabic is spoken by millions of people in an area extending from the Arabian Gulf to Western Africa;

(10)   Worldwide, more than 600 million Muslims use Arabic for religious purposes because it is the language of the Qur'an and Islamic traditions and literature;

(11)   Studying Arabic can lead to exciting careers in various fields. The following are only a few of the many positions open to the Classical Arabic speaker:

- **Communications**: Foreign correspondents, reporters, translators;
- **International Finance**: International Bankers, International Consultants, Political risk analysts.
- **Industry**: Manager of government relations for oil companies, market analysts for export companies;
- **Law**: Contractual and corporative consultants.
- **Academia**: Teaching and research positions; the U.S. governments currently considers Arabic as a critical language and many scholarships are available for learning Arabic at home and abroad;
- **Government**: Foreign-service officers; development programme officers; intelligence analysts; government relations specialists; translators or interpreters.

(12)   Knowing Arabic provides a tool to explore a very rich and exciting world of Arabic philosophy, essays, literature, poetry, and calligraphy.

(13)   Knowing Arabic provides the ability to work and interact effectively with speakers of Arabic, to learn about their interesting cultures, histories and traditions, and to enjoy their warm hospitality.

(14)   Knowing Arabic facilitates and enhances travel to Arab countries and the exploration of the sites of many ancient civilizations and the birth place of major religions;

(15)   Knowing Arabic helps understand Arab media and develop insight into the cultural, religious and political forces that motivate the people of the Arab world to act the way they do.

Islamic Cultural Studies

In all, more than 600 million persons today, one-sixth of humanity profess themselves to be Muslims. The religion and culture of Islam have been and still are very important in shaping the thinking and outlook of millions of Africans in general Nigerians particularly in the Northern States of the country as well as in Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti and Delta States just a few in the Southern part of the federation, Abuja, the capital Territory, and the

36 States of Nigeria. But, issues that affect Muslims - the Shariah, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the holy pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (Hajj), and the question of Muslim rights in the Constitution - in the past as well as the present, have often been treated with levity, derision, and contempt by the media, most of which are dominated by Christians. Islamic Interest Free Banking, e.g. is beneficial to all Muslims and non-Mulslims but it is attacked. Nigeria's Muslims easily constitute the largest Muslim community in sub-Saharan Africa. In many of Nigeria's 36 States, including Lagos and the new capital territory Abuja, Muslims are a majority. Although Muslims are in majority, the country since independence has been governed by its rulers - Muslims as well as non-Muslims and its intellectual and business elites as if it were a non-Muslim country. The symbols and trappings of state; the style of diplomacy; the direction of foreign policy; the political, legal, economic, and education systems; and the structures of the working week are all based on a western, secular, albeit once Christian, model. At these and other levels, Muslims see a clear continuity between the old colonial state and the " new" Nigeria in which they, the largest group in the country, are supposed to participate actively without attempting to change or restructure it along Islamic lines.

Rumor, rhetoric, and misinformation aside, there is nothing in the Muslim demands that support the more alarmist, non-Muslim interpretation of them, nor is there anything any Muslim-led Nigerian administration has done that would lend credence to such an interpretation (Clarke 1988). Successive Nigerian rulers copy the west in their attitude towards Islamic Cultural Studies and solutions to problems in general and violence in particular. In the opinion of Wilfred Smith (1977). The West sees Islam as an enemy and a threat:

> Europe has known Islam for thirteen centuries, mostly as an enemy and a threat. It is no wonder that Muhammad (P.B.O.H) more than any other of the world's religious leaders had had `a poor press' in the west and that Islam is the least appreciated there of any of the world's outside faith.

Whereas, President Barack Hussein Obama of the United State of America eloquently remarked as follows, on June 4, 2009 in Egypt, in a speech directed to people worldwide:

> As a student of history, I ... know civilization's debt to Islam. It was Islam at places like Al-Azhar University - that carried the light of learning through so many centuries, paving the way for Europe's Renaissance and enlightenment. It was innovation in Muslim communities that developed the order of algebra; our magnetic compass and tools of navigation; our mastery of pens and printing: our understanding of how disease spreads and how it can be healed. Islamic culture has given us majestic arches and soaring spires; timeless poetry and cherished music; elegant music; elegant calligraphy and places of peaceful contemplation. And throughout history, Islam has demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality. (Govt, Press, 2009).

It is our submission that as long as Nigeria, African countries, Asian countries, United State of America, Europe and the rest of the world -including Muslim countries which emulate the west - stick to their man-made laws, they will always be on the brink of violence, chaos, hullabaloo and inevitability of political, social, economic, ethnic, religious, communication and cultural instability, to mention just a few. In Islam, civilization is not measured by the amount of riches, or population, or technology or industry. Civilization is measured by the extent to which it is able to make its people happy, to protect their interest, their honour, their property, Their life, and the extent to which it has been able to direct its people on the correct moral and ethical lines to ensure their happiness and peaceful social life; and the extent to which it is able to foster brotherhood, equility and justice among the people; and protect them from war, hatred, fear and oppression, and the extent to which it has been able to make its people live up to their expectation as human beings. Islam places more value on real happiness and peace than on the mere possession of wealth and property. The criterion for human civilization is its ability to satisfy both the material and spiritual needs of each individual rather than particularly satisfying his material needs neglecting his spiritual - and thus his mental, emotional, and psychological needs. The Qur'an is quite vocal in disproving wealth, material, technological splendour, and military supremacy as the criteria for real civilization (Sulaiman, 1974).

Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Studies

Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies pervade social sciences. Arabic numerals, any of the symbols 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 etc are used for writing numbers in many countries of the world. Also, social sciences, the study of people in society with multidisciplinary examples in Politics, Economics, Geography, Sociology, Psychology etc, have a lot in common with Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies. In point of fact, Dudley, (1975), argues that one might want to ask why it is thought necessary for us to produce graduates in Economics or Political Science, Geography or Sociology. Why not a graduate in Social Science where Social Science constitutes a balanced mix of sub-sets of the set of discipline we presently call the Social Sciences? It all contributes to a certain mystique about education and hence grounds for a claim to privilege. As long as such an outlook persists for so long will we and our students be hide bound to that common place which masquerades as the profound. In the process, we deny our calling which requires us, as teachers and students, that which the greatest of all teachers, Socrates, sought to inculcate a sceptical outlook. The Association of Muslim Social Scientists and the International Institute of Islamic Thought have jointly canvassed the efficacious utility of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences.

Some of the areas covered in recent times include:
- Islamization of the Discipline of Education;
- Islamization of Methodology of Behavioural Sciences;
- Islamic Economics;
- Issues in the Methodology of Islamic Thought;
- Political Science in the Legacy of Classical Islamic Literature;
- Towards an Islamic Administrative Theory;
- Re-Islamization of the West African *Ummah*: Model For Tajdid?; to mention just a few. (AJISS, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990).

Also, business transactions, branches of management and Social Sciences have been documented according to the Islamic Injunctions (Ambali, 1978).

Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Political Science

According to the traditional understanding, there is in Islam no division of religion and politics (in the most general sense of the term). The *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* give definite instructions for the individual as well as for the social and political community. The mantra, there is no separation between religion and politics in Islam. *Islam din wa dawla* (Islam is religion and state) is not a recent vintage in the multidisciplinary analysis, data collection and comparative methodological approach in the study of man as a social being, as a member of society; the concern with moral ends of the state as well as the legal, economic, social, political and formal structures of government, the origins of the state, nationally and internationally, processes, institutions and groups, the relationships among them and/the behavioural revolution.

Dudley, (1975) explains five activities which politics entails:

Firstly there is what one might call consciousness formation, that is, the evoking of awareness amongst a collectivity of the issues and problems confronting that collectivity. Secondly, there is social mobilization, which is the organization of a collectivity for joint, collaborative action. Thirdly, politics is, as the continentals would put it, contestation, the contesting of the determination of national priorities through the process of argumentation and debate. Fourthly, there is institutionalized struggle, or in the words of Rappoport, the conversion of fights into games and debates. Fifthly, transcendence, the bringing about of change both at the level of person and at the systemic and sub-systemic levels. In conclusion, Professor Dudley stated that politics/political science is the systematic study of these various components of politics. It is pertinent however, to point out that definitions of politics and political activities are legion. Politics is the authoritative allocation of values: it is the determination of who gets what, when, and how; politics is the acquisition, sharing and shaping of power. (Olayiwola, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 1996, 1995, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1989, 1987, 1984, 1974). Are these five activities the same political activities in Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies? What are the Principles of State and Government in Islam? Are there misapplications of western concepts of Democracy, Human Rights etc to Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies?

Branches of Social Sciences that can benefit from classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural studies

- Economics is a Social Science that seeks to analyze and describe the production, distribution and consumption of wealth;
- Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of knowledge, positive judgement and well-developed wisdom.
- Human Geography — focuses largely on the built environment and how space is created, viewed and managed by humans as well as the influence humans have on the space they occupy. Physical geography examines the natural environment arid

how the climate, vegetation and life, soil, water and landforms are produced and interact. Environmental geography combines physical and human geography and looks at the interaction between the environment and humans.

- History is the continuous, systematic, narrative and research into past human events as interpreted through historio-graphical paradigms or theories.
- Law - in common parlance, means a rule which (unlike a rule of ethics) is capable of enforcement through institutions.
- Linguistics — investigates the cognitive and social aspects of human language.
- Political Science — is an academic and research discipline that deals with the theory and practice of politics and the description and analysis of political systems and political behaviour.
- Public Administration s the development, implementation and study of branches of government policy.
- Psychology is an academic and applied field involving the study of behaviour and mental processes. It also refers to the application of such knowledge to various spheres of human activity, including problems of individuals' daily lives and the treatment of mental illness.
- Sociology — is the systematic study of society and human social action.

Further fields
Additional Social Science disciplines and fields of study include:
- Archaeology -- is the Science that studies human cultures through the recovery, documentation, analysis, and interrelation of material remains and environmental data, including architecture, artifacts, features, biofacts, and landscapes.
- Area studies — are interdisciplinary fields of research and scholarship pertaining to particular geographical, national/federal, or cultural regions.
- Behavioural Science — a term that encompasses all the disciplines that explore the activities of and interactions among organisms in the natural world.
- Communication Studies — is an academic field that deals with processes of communication, commonly defined as the sharing of symbols over distances in space and time.
- Demography — is the statistical study of all populations.
- Development studies - a multidisciplinary branch of Social Science which addresses issues of concern to developing countries.
- Environmental Social Science is the broad, trans-disciplinary study of interrelations between humans and the natural environment.
- Environmental Studies integrate Social, Humanistic, and natural Science perspectives on the relation between humans and the natural environment.
- Information Science — is an interdisciplinary Science primarily concerned with the collection, classification, manipulation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information.
- International studies — covers both international relations (the study of foreign affairs and global issues among states within the international system) and international

education (the comprehensive approach that intentionally prepares people to be active and engaged participants in an interconnected world).

- Journalism is the craft of conveying news, descriptive material and comment via a widening spectrum of media.
- Legal management — is a Social Sciences discipline that is designed for students interested in the study of State and Legal elements.
- Library Science — is an interdisciplinary field that applies the practices, perspectives, and tools of management, information technology, education, and other areas to libraries, the collection, organisation, presentation and dissemination of information resources, and the political, economy of information.
- Management — in all business and human organization activity is simply the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals and objectives.
- Political economy – is the study of production, buying and selling, and their relations with law, custom and government.
- Anthropology – is the holistic "Science of man" – a Science of the totality of human existence. (Olayiwola, 2012).

Five Impediments to Effective Theory – Building in the study of Middle Eastern Political System and Social Sciences

The Nature of the Subject Matter: The essence of politics involves power and authority relations. In the Middle East, power relations often are hidden, disguised, and in a constant state of flux. The electmental sinews of the political systems are informal, primordial, and personalistic. (Bill, 1994). To penetrate to the political core of Middle Eastern societies, the researcher must possess a deep understanding of Middle Eastern history and culture, enormous skill in interpersonal relations, and advanced language skills. As a result of these difficulties, scholars have tended to focus their research upon the externalities of politics and social sciences.

The False Dichotomy of Area Studies and Theory: The debate concerning the relationship between area studies and theory-building has raged for years in Middle East studies. One group of theorists has denigrated the importance of area studies. On the other hand, a larger number of scholars has severely criticized theoretical investigation in Middle East studies. In their view, the preoccupation with theory is an incomprehensible, sterile exercise engaged in by those who lack the linguistic and cultural expertise to work effectively in the field. In fact, however, area studies provide much of the data that is essential for theory construction. The higher the quality of the data, the greater the explanatory power of the theory.

The Tension between Field Researchers and Theoreticians: At one extreme in Middle East scholarship are individuals who immerse themselves in the field. These are the "fact-grubbers," the human vacuum cleaners who never get enough data. Their file cabinets bulge with information gathered over the years while they continually study new dialects and plan research trips to obscure villages. At the other extreme are the ivory-tower theoreticians who are more comfortable generating hypotheses in their offices than they are living in the field.

While the fact-grubbers content themselves gathering different grains of sand in the desert, the theorists see only large barren desert blurs. In the former category are many "Orientalists" who view theoretically conscious social scientists as area novices for whom for-whom formal logic takes precedence over human understanding. In the latter group are theorists who view Orientalists as unscientific eccentrics who while away their time making tribal migrations, studying 13th-century camel saddles and, in general, glorifying that which is obscure and different. The most successful analysts of Middle Eastern political and social systems,. -are those who delight in field work while at the same time remaining always aware of their particular organizing and orienting theoretical approaches.

Limited Collaborative Research: Theory-building in the study of Middle East politics society and social sciences has suffered from the limited nature of truly collaborative research. Researchers of Middle East politics and society have not built upon the work of one another, especially in the important exercise of theory-building. Rather than using and refining the conceptual and theoretical contributions of colleagues, scholars have tended to ignore the work of others and to build their own intellectual constructs. In so doing, they continue to invent the same conceptual wheels again and again. Historians of science stressed the critical need for researchers to advance continually by leaping from the shoulders of one another. This kind of collaboration is rare in the study of Middle Eastern political and social systems.

The Predominance of the Case Study: Although there is a legitimate role for case studies in the scientific method, cross-national, cross-cultural, and multicontextual research is particularly valuable for theory construction. Patterns and processes that cut across nation-state boundaries lead directly to the core of theory, i.e., generalization. The literature concerning Middle East political and social systems, however, tends to be monocontextual. The reasons for the prevalence of the case study reside in the difficult nature of the subject matter, the need for special research skills, the constraints of time and resources and the ingrained reluctance of many to generalize about Middle Eastern issues. Despite these "serious impediments to theory Construction in the scholarship on Middle Eastern political and social systems, there have been a number of recent constructive developments.

The Middle East: The Future of Theory

In recent years, considerable scholarly activity has taken place in the early stages of the theory-building process. At the problemation stage, important questions concerning the essence of Middle Eastern political and social processes are increasingly raised. The issues addressed include the informal dimensions of politics and society, the concept of civil society and processes of democratization, the relationship between the economy and the political and social systems, and the interaction between Islam, politics, economy, culture, history, language and society. In the stage of observation and classification, recent advances in survey research have begun to provide a larger universe of information that is being organized in a way that invites generalization. Another positive trend has been an increase in collaborative research. This trend has helped overcome the resistance of the subject matter to penetrating observation, the preoccupation with case studies, and the scholarly reluctance

to generalize. In sum, the study of comparative politics and society in the Middle East is moving toward a more balanced concern both for systematic empirical data gathering and for theoretical rigor. This advance is apparent in the growing clusters of middle-range generalizations that help explain the different facets of power and authority relations in the Middle Eastern context. Such explanatory insights are most often found in collaborative and comparative exercises engaged in by individuals who, while immersed in field work, are sensitive to the need to work- in a consciously rigorous manner. (Bill, 1994).

The Mosque as a channel for Development – Communication

As a meeting place, the mosque is a cynosure and focal point for followers of the Islamic faith. This serves to bring a large body of people together. Depending on the status of the mosque - either it is a small one for every day prayers or it is a bigger one to include the Friday services - and the size of the Muslim population, the mosque possesses the potentiality of amassing people into a large crowd. Again, the institutionalized position of the mosque is well recognized. As an institutionalized medium, the mosque is being used for various purposes to reach that large body of followers. Imams, who are leaders of the mosques, are known to mount the pulpit to recite the sermon on Fridays or on special occasions such as independent anniversaries, periods of national plague, national mourning, the *Id-el-Fitr* and *Id-el-Kabir etc* and at all these occasions, they make comments and offer advice and suggestions on matters affecting the polity and society. These sermons are however, backed often by recitations of verses from the holy Qur'an. In this way, these sermons are buttressed and rendered credible. For instance, the chief Imam of Lagos Central Mosque. Alhaji Liadi Ibrahim joined Nigerians to condemn the execution in 1965 by firing squad of three cocaine pushers convicted under the notorious miscellaneous offences decree 20 of 1984 under the Buhari/Idiagbon regime arguing that Allah had forbidden the cheaping of human lives. Similarly, various religious leaders expressed reservation at the execution of the ten senior army officers for their part in the Vasta led attempted coup against General Ibrahim Babangida on the grounds that Islam advocates peace and upholds a sense of forgiveness as a virtue. Similarly in Sudan, in the wake of the Islamic upsurge championed by the Muslim brotherhood, the mosque was widely utilized, for political and social sermons showing why Sudan must adopt Islam as a state religion and the basis for the mosque has been and is being used as a channel for the communication of political and social messages. The same can be said of economic and social development oriented messages. (Mohammed, 1987).

The Need for a Muslim Centre for Media Research

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious... (Qur'an 16:125)

> O ye who believe! Shall I lead you to a bargain that will save you from a grievous penalty? That ye believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that ye strive (your utmost) in the Cause of Allah, with your property and your persons; that will be best for you if ye but knew! He will forgive you your sins, and admit you to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, and to beautiful Mansions in Gardens of Eternity: that is indeed the supreme Achievement. (Qur'an 61:10-12).

The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about, and have feelings about. (Lang and Lang, in Berelson and Janowitz (eds) (1966)., *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication; pp. 147-155*. There is an urgent need to establish Muslim Centres for Media Research in the West Africa, Asia, the Middle East, United States of America and Latin America in order to foster a better understanding of Islam and Muslims. Such Centres will also be responsible for promoting favourable coverage of Muslim and Islamic affairs and responding to negative coverage. As Allah reminds people in the Qur'an:

> … Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)… (Qur'an 13:11).

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.O.H) also said:

> Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart - and that is the weakest of faith. (Hadith: Muslim).

The Western media do deliberately distort the information they disseminate about Islam and Muslims to their audience, the citizens of various nations. In most cases, they knowingly exclude some vital pieces of information about Islam and the Muslims, if those pieces are likely to lead the world into drawing a conclusion that will favour Islam and the Muslims, and the Western leaders do not like such favourable image for Islam. The Western media can also remain simply quiet over some crucial Islamic issues or Muslim matters when and where the world population is thirsting for information; and they often seek to divert the world attention from very important Islamic issues by crowding the peoples' mind with trivialities. It is our contention that the future would have no pity for those men who, possessing the exceptional privilege of being able to speak words of truth to their oppressors, have taken refuge in an attitude of passivity, of mute indifference, and sometimes, of cold complicity. The Centre's work will focus on problems and issues arising in the collection, compilation, collation and dissemination of Muslim news and Islamic Information as well as the management of Muslim Communication and Media Relations. The Centre will also act as a focus for mass media monitoring, research, development, planning, investigation, analysis, writing, editing, publication, news and programmes production and presentation as well as consultancy work in all aspects of Muslim Communication, Information and Media Services, policy and practice. It will also act as a focus of Muslim organizations, societies, mosques, and individuals conducting research into Muslim communication and information services from a variety of background and disciplinary perspectives. Being based in Western Capitals, the Muslim Centre for Media Research will offer the advantages of proximity to the BBC and some ITV companies, Reuters, the Press (both national and international), News Agencies, the Central Office of Information, other media and advertising organisations. Parliament, government offices, advertising agencies, media producers/writers and public relations and public opinion agencies.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Although, area studies per se should not be abandoned, the conceptual horse should be put in front of the areal cart so that scholarly investigation is hung on a stronger intellectual reed than the mere fact that the fields and regions involved are interesting. The filed of Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies in Social Sciences should become truly interdisciplinary not only in their melding of political science and area studies, but also by recognition of the potential artificiality of political science as a discretized field of investigation when the growth of true social science should be our goal. It is imperative that this field be permitted to flourish alongside other political, economic, communication, legal, sociological, psychological, historical, and social science subfields. Should this not evolve, both the field of Classical Arabic, Islamic Cultural Studies and Political Science in general, and Social Sciences and Middle East Politics and society in particular, will be poorer for it. It is recommended that the lacuna which exists in Universities where Academic members of staff in various major Departments do not have Classical Arabic, Islamic Cultural Studies and Social Sciences as their primary research focus should be reviewed. Some Universities do not offer courses in Middle East Social Sciences at all as they exist in other Universities outside the continent. Classical Arabic and Islamic Cultural Studies which are in Humanities – the subjects of study that are connected with the way people think and behave could be combined with Social Sciences. Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences can also merge to facilitate this interdisciplinary venture.

More funding of Academic programmes in Classical Arabic, Islamic Cultural studies and Social Sciences should be invested by Government and Private bodies and individuals. For example,
-University college London – UCL Data offers MA courses in Archaeology of the Arab and Islamic World.
-University of Birmingham-School of History and Cultures and
-University of Edinburgh-School of Languages, Literatures and cultures offer
*M.Sc. courses in Arab World Studies
*M.Sc. courses in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies
-University of Exeter –College of Social Sciences and International Studies. Offers
*MA courses in Islamic Studies
*MA courses in Middle East Politics
*MA courses in North African Politics
*MA courses in Palestine Studies to mention just a few.

In this regard, the Lagos State University (LASU) proposed New Bachelor of Arts Degree in Arabic and International Studies is a welcome development at the right time and in the right direction. Current demands of globalsiation and free market economy have heightened the need for competence in foreign languages. Arabic is one of the official languages in many world and regional organizations. The Nigerian foreign Service, the oil industry, the intelligence service and international trade currently require more than at any other time in the past, qualified Arabists with a good training in international studies. At the moment, no Nigerian University is proving this kind of training in spite of the rich market and remarkable potential for students. The LASU new B.A Degree in Arabic and International Studies is

designed in response to the challenge of globalization and to enable students acquire a good measure f competence and proficiency in both spoken and written aspects of Arabic language as well as give them a good grasp of International Relations.

It is also aimed at:

- Producing competent scholars who will be able to function effectively in social and economic spheres of life.
- Turning out career diplomats, translations, interpreters etc, who will be useful in Foreign Service, International Media Organisations, Corporate Agencies, the oil industry, immigration service among others.
- Introducing students to Arab culture and its effects and contributions to West African historical and intellectual heritage.
- Developing the interest of prospective students in foreign language acquisition and utilization and
- Creating better job opportunities and career prospects for the graduates.

Attention should also be paid to issues relating to information technologies, cities, towns and rural areas, a variety of public policy issues, and other important empirical phenomena. At the same time, dialogue should be encouraged with Social Scientists, Political Scientists, Geographers, Economists, Historians, Sociologists, Psychologists and other Social Scientists about what constitutes their conceptual cutting edges. University all over the world are expected to engage in research, teaching, provision of facilities for learning, character molding, personally development and service to the community. They are also required to utilize their research efforts and practical application of knowledge to social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological problems as well as contributing to national development and international peace.

REFERENCES

Abdul-Rahmon, M.O. (2008). "Perspectives in the Teaching and Learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Southwestern Nigeria" in Oseni, ZI. (Ed) *Fluorescence of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria Festschrift in Honour of Professor Wahab O.A. Nasiru* (Ibadan: HEBN Publishers Plc, 2008) pp. 1 – 8.

The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, Vol. 4, No. 2, December, 1087, Vol. 5, No. 1, September, 1988, Vol. 6, No. 2, December, 1989; Vol. 7, No. 1, March, 1990.

Ambali, M.A. (1978). "*Business Transactions according to Islamic Injunctions" (AL-ILMU-KNOWLEDGE*) Vol. viii, No. 1, December 1978, pp. 15 – 22.

Berelson, B. and Janowitz, M. (eds) (1966). *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication* (New York: Free Press, 1966; PP. 147-155.

Bill, J.A. (1994). "Comparative Middle East Politics" *Political Science and Politics*. Vol. xxvii, No. 3, September 1994.

Clarke, P. (1988) "Towards an Explanation of the response to Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria." paper Presented at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

Dobers, H., Abdullah, M.; Erl, W. and Khoury, A. (Ed) (1982). *Religion in Culture, Law and Politics* (Germany, 1982).

Dudley, B.J. (1975). "Scepticism and Political Virtue" An Inaugural Lecture, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, 1975.

Govt. Press (2009) on Obama http://w.w.w.whitehouse. Govt./the press office/Remarks by-the-president-at-Cairo University-6-04-09.

Muhammed, J. (1987). "The Mosque as a Channel of Development Communication". *Mass Media and the African Society*. (Nairobi, ACCE, 1987).

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2010) "Political Communication and Radio Broadcasting: The Impact of Ownership and Control on News Production in the Ibadan B.C.O.S. *Journal of Business and Organizational Development Vol. 3,* December, 2011. PP. 9-20.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1995), "Islam and the Demise of the First and Second Republics in Nigeria, A Functional Approach": *The Islamic Quarterly* (London) volume XXXIX No. 3 1995; pp. 154-166.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1984), A *Detailed Introduction to the Elements of Government (Ibadan:* Board Publications Ltd, 1984).

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011) " Development and Political Issues in a Democratizing Society. The Nigerian Example. *Journal of Management and Corporate Governance.* Vol. 3, December, 2011.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011), "Democratization, Good Governance and Education: A Comparative study of Political and Social Issues in Education in Two Local Government Councils in Britain and Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Policy Review,* Vol. 3. December, 2011.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2011). "Human Rights, Human Wrongs and the Rule of Law: Analysis and Action". *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy,* Vol. 3, December, 2011.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012). Challenges of Health Development at the Local Levels: A Comparative Study of Bri tish and Nigerian Local Government Councils. *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy,* Vol. 4, March, 2012. PP. 1-28.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012), Federalism, Ethnic Politics, State and Religion in Nigeria. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society,* Vol. 4, March, 2012.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan. (1989). The Concept of Communication." In *Annals of the Social Science Council of Nigeria* No. 2, Jan-Dec. 1989, p. 109.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan. (1991), "Democracy in Islam": *Islamic Culture* (India and F&kistan) Vol. LXV No 2-3, April-July 1991; pp. 63-83. Also, published in *Islamic Quarterly*, London, Volume XXXVII No. 3 1993; pp. 190-206.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1996) "Political Communication in Nigeria" in D Paletz ed (Chapter 3) Political Communication in Action. (New Jersey U.S.A. Hampton (1996). pp. 55-72.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (1986) "Political and Organisational Communication in Local Government Administration" in A.A. Ogunsanya (ed.) *Local Government Administration in Nigeria Since Independence* (Ilorin: FBSS, Univ. of Ilorin, 1986) Chapter 8, pp. 63-70.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan. (1993), "Interpersonal Communication, Human Interaction and Societal Relationships in Islam: *Africa Media Review* 1993 (Nairobi. Kenya) Volume 7, No. 3; pp. 91-105.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1987) "Nationalism and Nation-building in Islam" in C.S Momoh (ed.) Nigerian Studies in Religious Tolerance, Vol. Ill: Religion in Nation-building Lagos: C.B.A.A.C., University of Lagos, 1987).

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1974), "A Profile on the life of Abu-Bakr, the First Caliph of Islam" Al-*IIm: Knowledge* Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1974, pp 76-78.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1987), "Problems of Communication in Local Government Administration" (*ASCON Journal of Management,* (Topo: Badagry, Lagos), Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1987, pp 52-63.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1988), "Islam and the Conduct of Foreign Relations in Nigeria", *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* vol. 9, No. 2, July 1988 pp. 356-365 (London and Jeddah). Also published in Islamic Quarterly, London, .Volume XXXIII, Number 1, 1989, pp. 17-34.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1990), "Nationalism and Nation-building in Islam." *The Islamic Quarterly,* London Vol. XXXIV, No. *2* 1990, pp 101-111.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012) "Social Science Education for Self-Reliance paper for Lagos State University 2012 International Conference, Faculty of Education, LASU, Ojo, Lagos. July, 2012.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan (2012) "Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives".

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1991), "Political Communications: Press and Politics in Nigeria's Second Republic" Africa *Media Review,* (Nairobi: Kenya) Vol. 5, No. 2, 1991, pp. 31-45.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1992), "Human Rights in Islam" The *Islamic Quarterly",* London Volume XXXVI (No. 4) 1992; pp. 262 279.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1981), " The Growth of Journalism in Oyo State" (Ibadan, *Oyo State Year Book and* Who's Who 1981 pp. 75-77.

Olayiwola, Abdur-Rahman Olalekan: (1995), "Communication, Population and Child Development/Survival in Africa: An Islamic/Communication Perspective *The Islamic Quarterly,* London Volume XXXIX No 3 1995; pp. 154-166.

Sanni, A. (2005). "Forward" in Amuni, A. (2005). *Arabic Language in the Modern World*. (Ikeja: Office Publishing Co; 2005).

Sulaiman, I. (1974). "Islamic Concept of Civilization" *AL-'ILMU-KNOWLEDGE*. Vol. 4, No. 3, April, 1974.