



Western Media and Arabs & Muslims

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ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this research is to look at how the Western media contributes to discrimination against Arabs and Muslims. It demonstrates how Westerners and the Western media persecute and belittle Arabs and Muslims. Arabs and Muslims are portrayed in the Western media as barbarians and terrorists. Since the beginning of the media, the American media has stereotyped Arabs and Muslims. The American government has treated them badly. The prejudice against Arab Americans has caused a slew of issues for Arabs, Arab-Americans, and Muslims, all of whom are expressing their Arab identity in one way or another. A racist policy has been implemented towards Arabs and Muslims in the United States of America throughout the history of Western media, notably following the horrific assaults of 9/11 on the World Trade Center in New York City. Following the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, the American government found a suitable justification to legitimise its attacks and campaigns against Arabs and Muslims, not only in the United States of America, but also in Arab and Muslim countries. A racist policy has been implemented towards Arabs and Muslims in the United States of America throughout the history of Western media, notably following the horrific assaults of 9/11 on the World Trade Center in New York City. Following the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, the American government found a suitable justification to legitimise its attacks and campaigns against Arabs and Muslims, not only in the United States of America, but also in Arab and Muslim countries. Arabs and Muslims all over the world have been subjected to massive defamation and aggression campaigns by the Western media in general, and the American media in particular. They are also victims of dictatorial governments in their native countries, and if they are forced to criticise their governments and policies, they risk losing their lives and may be sentenced to death or life imprisonment.

Keywords: *Arabs, Muslims, Western Media, Hate, Crimes.*

Introduction

In the twenty-first century, the media has become a powerful weapon. It's a weapon with two sides. To put it another way, media can be both a tool for good and a tool for evil. Many global crises can be resolved through diplomatic discourse and the influence of a good media. The majority of the world's issues, on the other hand, have been sparked by negative agendas and poor media coverage. War can be sparked by the media. The media sets the tone, and then the war follows. The battle between the United States of America and Arabs and Muslims has been going on for a long time. However, it has been a long and difficult historical fight. For decades, the American government has waged war on Arabs and Muslims for a variety of legitimate reasons.



The first is that Americans despise Arabs and Muslims for their religious and national identities. The second major reason is that the American government adheres to the principle of "divide and conquer." Americans believe that Arabs and Muslims pose a threat to their national security and are responsible for instabilities. They make every effort to foment hostility between Arabs and Muslims around the world, either directly or indirectly. By fomenting such conflicts in Arab and Muslim countries, the United States may gain control of the most significant ports and utilise natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gold mining, and other lucrative commodities that are abundant in the Arab world. Arabs and Muslims are portrayed as uncivilised, violent, and terrorists in the American media. Arab women have also been portrayed in the Western media as being unattractive, ignorant, belly dancers, and useless.

Review of Literature:

This research work is significant since it provides people with a wealth of information regarding the historical conflict and crises between Arabs and Americans. Only a few studies have looked into such issues as the strife between Arabs and Muslims. The researcher is particularly interested in the function of Western mass media in fueling conflict and expanding the divide between Arabs and Muslims and Americans. The US government has anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudices. They fund their media in order to negatively portray Islam, Arabs, and Muslims in the eyes of Americans and others. According to Edward Said,

"The West promotes a deep-rooted hatred for Islam: The term Islam as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing, but in fact is part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam. Today Islam is peculiarly traumatic news in the West" (Ridouani, 2011).

Throughout history, the United States government has targeted Muslims, Arabs, and Arab Americans. For more than a century, Hollywood films have portrayed Arabs and Muslims in a bad light.

Based on the study of more than 900 films, it shows how moviegoers are led to believe that all Arabs are Muslims and all Muslims are Arabs. The moviemakers' distorted lenses have shown Arabs as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics through common depictions of Arabs kidnapping or raping a fair maiden; expressing hatred against the Jews and Christians; and demonstrating a love for wealth and power. (Shaheen, 171)

Governments and the media in the United States repress and marginalise Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims. They are physically and psychologically harmed as a result of their religion, culture, skin colour, and national identity, among other factors.

"In this respect, Arabs and American Muslims are identified and categorized through racial distinction, such as genetics or skin color, and also through some superficial cultural features such as religious symbols, like a beard, head covering, women's hijab/veil, using rosary and so on" (Considine, 6).

The Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims are constantly humiliated by American policies and media. Occasionally, many unfounded unfavourable comments



and complaints are directed at Arabs and Muslims. In response to the rising tide of anti-Muslim discourse in the United States, Ghazali observes:

The American attitudes regarding the Muslim community and Islamic faith are fuelled largely by political statements of various military and civil leaders and reporting in the media that focuses mostly on projecting a negative image of the Muslims and their faith. The vilification of Muslim community and their faith has been relentless among certain segments of the media and almost all political parties since 9/11. Most of the politicians, media commentators and authors have been very focused in their campaign of demonizing Islam as a faith and Muslims as a community. (Awan, 225)

If the media is not used appropriately, it can endlessly propagate violence and war. The American media is one of the worst sources of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim animosity and violence. They consider Arabs and Muslims to be inferior, and they wish for them to remain weak and insecure.

The role of US mainstream media contributes to conflating and demeaning Arab and Muslim Americans by the way they portray them and by talking about them and not with them. By painting a stereotyped image of Arab and Muslim Americans, the media reinforce the terrorist image as the most visible representation, especially when there is negative news about a member of them, rendering these people to be among the most invisible and marginalized groups. This invisibility of an entire people of hopes, struggles, and dreams gives way to the visibility of the state of Israel, adopting its narrative as victim and granting it the headlines of almost every media outlet. (Jaradat, 10)

Facts concerning the Western Media's Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Hatred:

Throughout history, the Western media, particularly the American media, has targeted Arabs and Muslims, notably following the 9/11 assaults on the World Trade Center. Many American TV networks, films, movies, and newspapers have directed a great deal of animosity and hate toward Arabs and Muslims. Most Americans see Arabs and Muslims as stupid, wealthy, and terrorists.

The Western representation of Muslims and Arabs is not a recent fabrication but it had been operational and deep-rooted in the West conceptualization ever since the first contacts with Arabs and Muslims. Down to the Middle Ages, especially during the Crusade Wars and along the Arabs expansion in Europe until the very days of the Third Millennium, the West promotes almost the same stereotypes for Arabs and Muslims. Whether the contact took place in the foregone centuries or it happens recently, the West preserve a persisting conceptualization of the Arabs and Muslims as an alien “Other” or rather “Enemy”, though both the means of communication and ascribing terminologies have known some changes. (Shaheen, 117)



The media's hostility toward Arabs, Arab Americans, Islam, and Muslims has been fueled by changes in American public policy. Many anti-Arab and anti-Muslim laws have been approved by the US Congress. For example, in the United States, the Patriot Acts I and II were passed, resulting in civil rights restrictions. Arabs and Muslims were allowed to be monitored through surveillance. Arabs and Muslims have been subjected to wiretaps. The American security forces interrogated Arabs and Muslims on a regular basis. The CIA used to conduct useless searches and investigations on Arabs and Muslims. Immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries were subjected to a slew of new regulations. Citizens of Arab and Muslim countries were denied entry to the United States. Discrimination and racism towards Arabs and Muslims are rampant in the American media.

The mainstream American Media played a pivotal role in stereotyping immigrants from Arab descent. The images they portrayed about Arabs and Muslims were images of barbaric, backward, women abuser, harem herder, oil-rich sheik, monster-like, and an immanent threat to the West and to the US. The movie industry, for example, and from the very early days of its existence, portrayed Arabs negatively and made jokes about them that are degrading. It also painted them as lacking civility and modernity. Many of the Hollywood-produced movies over the years that included Arabs or Muslims rarely portrayed them in any positive ways. On the contrary, it is almost always that negative images are run over and over again. (Jaradat, 49)

The American media used to propagate false information about Arabs and Muslims in order to smear their image and reputation in the eyes of the American people and the rest of the globe. When a Muslim or an Arab man commits a crime, the American media automatically accuses Arabs, Islam, and Muslims in general of the crime. Terrorists are represented as Arabs and Muslims with beards. According to Evelyn Alsultany, the media has a significant role in the discrimination of Arabs and Muslims. She claims that the Western media portrays the Middle East as a breeding ground for terrorism.

“The news media came to play a crucial role in making the Middle East, and Islam in particular, meaningful to Americans as a place that breeds terrorism” (Alsultany, 9).

Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims have a high rate of success in numerous industries. In the United States of America, a large number of Arabs and Muslims are highly educated, with the majority holding advanced degrees. They have primarily contributed to America's progress; nonetheless, the American media portrays them in a bad light.

Although many Arabs in America have reached the highest level of their profession in almost all professions the American media primarily highlight the negative achievements of Arabs and Muslims. Quite often, the media announce the Arab or Islamic origin or affiliation of anyone accused of a terrorist act even before they know whether the perpetrator is Arab or Muslim. (Suleiman, 16)



Summing Up:

In the United States of America, hate crimes and violence have been perpetrated against Arabs and Muslims. Hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims have increased in the United States of America, particularly since the September 11 attacks. Islam and Muslims, as well as Arabs and Arab Americans, have faced numerous challenges as a result of American racialization and prejudice. Every now and then, the American media has targeted Arabs and Muslims, depicting them as barbarians and terrorists. Written and spoken text, as well as audio and video Various hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims have been increasingly reported and displayed by the American media. Hundreds of films and movies on Muslims and Arabs have been shown in the United States. The fundamental reason is that the American administration and policy do not value the positive and outstanding reputation of Arabs and Muslims. They prefer to portray Arabs and Muslims as destitute and powerless around the world. They are attempting to tarnish the image of Islam, Arabs, and Muslims in the eyes of the entire world.

The Western media portrays Arabs as ugly, uncivilised, savage, terrorists, killers, rapists, religious extremists, oil-rich sheikhs, and women abusers, among other things. Arab and Arab American Muslim women have suffered in the same way as their male counterparts. Americans discriminate against them because they are Muslims, wear the Islamic hijab/veil, and other Islamic attire, and because of a slew of other minor excuses provided by the American false media. For religious, cultural, national identity, and other reasons, Americans racialize, discriminate, and marginalised Arabs and Muslims. For future research, the researcher proposes that all countries throughout the world build a variety of schools, institutes, and organisations that teach people to believe in cooperation, peace, and respect for other people's religions, cultures, and customs. They should instil the values of justice, equality, and liberty.

All ethical ideals must be referenced in the curriculum of World Educational Institutes, which will lead to the expansion of world peace, respect, globe stability, freedom, and coexistence among all nations of the world. The researchers suggest that the United Nations and other global goodwill and peacekeeping organisations support practical training courses on world peace and coexistence for students, teachers, and the majority of people in all communities around the world. Online training classes can also be highly beneficial. The study also advises that all governments around the world develop a variety of professional media channels that promote world peace, equality, justice, coexistence, and respect among people of different religions, classes, genders, races, cultures, and nationalities. Violence always fosters violence, and goodness always breeds goodness. To settle any conflicts anywhere and at any moment, the world of today should lean toward the language of peaceful discussion.

To summarise, media is a two-edged sword. It can either be a source of goodwill or an evil source. The media, in all of its forms, should be a valuable tool for promoting positive values such as peace, coexistence, equality and equity, justice, and freedom among nations around the world. The American media frequently condemns Arabs and Muslims for no reason, resulting in a crisis within a crisis.



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