

PORTRAYAL OF ARABS IN THREE INTERNATIONAL ELITE NEWSPAPERS

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The term *Arab World* may be misleading because there is no complete conformity and homogeneity among the twenty-two* countries that form the so-called Arab World. This is not to deny that these twenty-two countries share a common language, culture, common history, and that more than ninety percent of their populations practice Islam as a religion. The Arab World extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. This essay will examine how it is seen by three international elite newspapers and how governments, politicians, citizens and individuals of these twenty-two countries with a population of over 200 million are portrayed to U.S., French and British readers.

People of these three countries should know about Arabs and the Arab World for three main reasons. First, the Arab World enjoys a strategic position of vital importance to both the United States and the Soviet Union. Second, Arab petroleum resources and minerals are the center of attraction for the multinational corporations of the West. Third, the majority of the Arab countries were colonized by whether the United Kingdom or France and they still have strong ties with these two European powers.

The importance of the Arab World in world politics has increased tremendously in recent years. The importance of the region to the two superpowers and its geographical location between Europe and Asia have given a privileged status to the Arab World in international relations. In addition, the advent of oil and gas in the region has given some of the Arab countries an opportunity to play determinant roles in world politics. The state of Israel and its location in the heart of the Arab world is another factor that has given the region an international importance. The Arab-Israeli conflict has been dominating the politics of the Middle-East since 1948.

Diversity is one of the most important characteristics of the Arab World political and economic systems. Such systems vary from the Communist Democratic Republic of South Yemen to the conservative Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Some of the Arab countries are pro-western, others are pro-Soviet, while still others claim to be non-aligned. This diversity intensifies the maneuvers of the superpowers in the region.

According to the principles, objectives, and ethics of the Western press, Arabs in the press of France, the United Kingdom and the United States should get their share of fair, objective and balanced coverage. Given the importance of the Arab world and the region to the two superpowers and to international politics, Arabs should be presented to government officials,

* The twenty-two countries are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic, and Yemen People's Democratic Republic.

congressmen and citizens with the fullest possible coverage. They should be presented objectively in a historical, cultural, economic and political context in which they interact and live. These are the teaching of the free and responsible press that operates in a free market society.

However, the findings and comments of many scholars suggest that Western journalists do not practice objective reporting about the Arabs. Everywhere in the World the press operates under the pressures and constraints of the political and economic interests of the powerful and the decision-makers in the society. Commenting on the perceptions of Arabs among American school children, Edmund Ghareeb reports the following comments :

In the Spring of 1971, Peggy Alexander, a history teacher in the Sacramento, California area, asked her eighth grade students, "What is your image of an Arab?" These are some of the answers : "Arabs don't wear underclothes." "They are the hippy-type nomads." "Most of the men wear beards." "All Arabs have many wives." "All Arabs are Mohamendans." "The camel is the only means of transportation."¹

Ghareeb argues that the same stereotypes and negative images are prevalent among the adult Americans. A group of American engineers and technicians going to Saudi Arabia to work for ARAMCO were asked the following questions among others : "What is Islam?" and "Who is the prophet Mohammad?" Here are some answers :

"Islam is a game of chance similar to bridge," "A mysterious sect founded in the South by the Ku Klux Klan," "an organization of American Masons who dress in strange costumes," "Mohammad is the man who wrote the Arabian Nights," "an American Negro minister who was in competition with father Divine in New York City," "someone who had something to do with a mountain"²

The question to be answered here is who is responsible for this false information and distorted conception of the Arab World. Although this is very hard to answer, one can speculate about the role of the media in all of this. Henri Lefebvre asserts :

Mass media form the taste and dilute judgement. They instruct and they condition, they degenerate by saturation with images, with 'news' that is not newsworthy. They proliferate communication and thereafter coherence and reflection, vocabulary and verbal expression and language itself.³

In the context of this biased information and distorted conception of the Arabs, this paper raises the question of how *The New York Times*, *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* portrayed Arabs. Were they objective and faithful to the principles of the freedom of the press and did they present both sides of the argument — the Market model of communication. Or did they reflect the interests and concerns of those who have power and influence — Manipulative model of communication.

Theoretical Framework

Many theories of communication were developed and formulated by scholars and researchers to explain the mechanisms, interactions and operations of the mass media in the society.

For the purpose of this study, two models of communication are used : The Market model and the Mass Manipulative model. The Market or Commercial model conceives news as follows :

News is a natural category of event which must — in good professional journalism — be reported as objectively as possible. The journalist, therefore, goes out in the objective world of events to pursue news which she/he captures in his or her notebook or newsreel and takes back triumphantly to his or her editor.⁴

The Market model reflects the theses of the free market economy, that media operate in an atmosphere of total independence and freedom. Advocates of this model argue that there are a variety of opinions and points of view presented by the media. Everybody is allowed to speak and to present his side of the truth. Consequently, this leads to the annihilation and suppression of any kind of media manipulation and control.⁵

The Manipulative model in contrast, treats mass media as part of the superstructure of the society. News organizations reflect and present the interests of those economic and political forces that control the society as a whole. These forces are the multinational corporations, cartels, trusts, political parties, interest groups, and lobbies. The economic forces manipulate political forces as well as the means of communication and the educational institutions. The economic forces use the whole system in the society to achieve their own interests regardless of the interests of the vast majority of the society :

Here the media and journalists are seen as acting directly in the interests of the owners, whose interests in turn are quite opposed to the public at large and to any true presentation of events in the world. The journalists are ideological hacks who select news according to the criterion of whether it serves the interests of their paymaster, omitting all else. They distort reality in order to get the propagandistic needs of their employers.⁶

According to this model, the political and economic forces in the society manipulate the media and use them to perpetuate opinions, false consciousness and ideology that enhance and promote their political and economic interests. In this model, there is only one monolithic and powerful source. The people and the masses are passive recipients. The "plateau" is only accessible to those who have the power. Commenting on the difficult and almost impossible accessibility of the masses to the political communication process, Mueller writes :

If the members of a political community are not significantly involved in the decision-making process and if they do not dispose of sufficient socio-political knowledge as well as a language that facilitates the unsrambling of governmental jargon and exposing style often designed to disguise intent, they have no counterinterpretations to offset official ones, nor can they establish relationships among fragmented pieces of political information they may obtain through the mass media.⁷

In this theoretical framework, two opposite models of communication are presented. Both try to explain the mechanism of news selection, news interpretation and editorial decisions in the news organizations. The two models proceed from two different ideological stories and they view things in quite different manners. The findings of the content analysis study of *The*

New York Times, *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* will be interpreted along the lines of this framework. However, it is to be noted that both models go too far in their interpretations of the reality of mass media operations in the society.

Related Studies

A substantial number of studies have been done on the images of Arabs in the Western press, mainly in the United States. All of them used the content analysis method and most of them presented a comparison of the portrayal of Arabs and Israelis. The majority of these studies concluded that Arabs were negatively portrayed and Israelis were presented in a positive way.

In 1956, Suleiman studied the coverage of the Middle East in *The New York Times*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Life*, *The Nation* and *The New Republic*, concluding that "the Arabs were presented as the 'bad guys,' the aggressors against the 'poor loving' Israelis... while the Israelis were presented as Western-like and democratic."⁸

A quarter century later, Suleiman reexamined the portrayal of Arabs in these media.⁹ He found little change, figures of the study showed that antagonism toward the Arabs and support for Israel had increased :

Israel strikes at its neighbors, mistreats its Arab population, or annexes new territory, such actions are justified and Israeli arguments are presented as proof of the logic and rightness of the situation. Furthermore, the Arabs were at the time of the June war frequently and almost indiscriminately associated with the Communist Camp.¹⁰

Terry and Mendenhall in a study of the 1973 U.S. press coverage of the Middle East, content analyzed news items from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Detroit Free Press*. The authors coded items into five directions : pro-Arab, anti-Arab, pro-Israeli, anti-Israeli, and neutral. The findings suggest that there was a consistent pro-Israeli and anti-Arab bias in the three U.S. newspapers. The "bias is particularly ardent in editorials and, to a lesser extent, in feature stories."¹¹

Daugherty and Warden studied the prestige press editorial treatment of the Mideast during eleven crisis years (1967-1977). The authors content analyzed 644 articles in *The Wall Street Journal* into the following categories : "supportive of Israel," "critical of Israel," "supportive of the Arab Nations," "critical of the Arab Nations," and "neutral." The findings suggest that there is a "pro-Israeli tone in all four newspapers."¹²

Sreebny conducted a survey on American correspondents in the Middle East. Most of the surveyed correspondents believed that the U.S. media has been pro-Israeli and anti-Arab.¹³

Al-Karni content analyzed the front pages of *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* from 1970 to 1980, looking at the amount of coverage the U.S. elite newspapers devoted to the Middle East in terms of which countries received the most attention and what kinds of news was reported. Figure of this study show that Israel received more news stories and more favorable coverage than any other Middle Eastern country.¹⁴

The findings of all the above studies concluded that the U.S. media showed a pro-Israeli and an anti-Arab stand in their coverage of the Middle-Eastern events.

Few other studies concerned with the images of Arabs in U.S. media concluded that the coverage was objective and impartial.

In 1981, Nkana examined the coverage of the Camp David Peace Initiative by *The new York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The author content analyzed the editorials of the two newspapers using the sentence as the recording unit and classifying it as factual, non-factual, attributed or unattributed. The findings of this study suggest that the two U.S. elite newspapers provided a very good and objective coverage of the Camp David Peace Initiative. The author concludes :

According to the date presented, both newspapers were highly impartial and showed no favoritism to any individual. Their coverage was consistent and balanced.¹⁵

Mishra content analyzed the news from the Middle East in *The New York Time*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune* and CBS Evening News. The news organizations of this study concentrated their coverage on Israel, Egypt and Iran. Items dealing with political issues, the Arab-Israeli conflict, human interest, and U.S. interests in the region were "treated in a neutral and a professional journalistic fashion."¹⁶

Another set of studies showed that the portrayal of Arabs in U.S. media was pro-Arab.

Belkaoui examined the images of Arabs and Israelis in the U.S. press for a period of eight years (1966-1974), coding 442 articles from *Times*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report* and *Sunday New York Daily News*. She compared the coverage of the 1967 and 1973, finding a significant decline in support for Israel and, to a lesser extent, a slight increase in support for the Arab states.¹⁷

Asi undertook a time series content analysis study on the images of Arabs and Israelis in ABC, CBS and NBC.¹⁸ Three time periods were used: 1973 to the war in 1976, 1976-77 after the war and before Sadat's trip to Jerusalem, and 1979 after Sadat's trip to Israel. The author developed a five-point scale with "very favorable" on one end and "very unfavorable" on the other. The findings of Asi's study suggest that in 1979 Egypt received more favorable coverage than Israel did. In addition, Palestinians and The Palestine Liberation Organization have been gaining more positive and favorable coverage. However, this positive coverage did not extend to the rest of the Arab World.

Ajani wrote a thesis on the coverage of the Israeli raid against the Iraqi nuclear reactor by four elite U.S. newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Chicago Tribune*. The author examined the quality of the coverage in terms of display and direction, and analyzed the papers' editorials about the raid in terms of space and direction. Results of the study show that the four U.S. prestigious dailies did not cover more than 52 percent of the facts and information that were reported by other sources about the issue during the period under study. The coverage was neutral, but editorials showed an anti-Israeli stand. The author concludes that, "the U.S. elite newspapers are not, as usually alleged, the 'blind horse' of Israel's policies and actions."¹⁹

Overall, it can be concluded that the bulk of the studies on the images of Arabs in U.S. media shows a favorable coverage of Israel and an anti-Arab stand.

Methodology

This paper analyses the coverage of events involving Arabs in three elite newspapers of three Western industrialized countries. The focus will be on the direction of coverage in terms of attitudes and stands of the newspapers toward the Arabs.

Selection of the papers

The New York Times, *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* are considered the newspapers of record in their respective countries, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. They are national newspapers read locally all over their home countries. In addition they are distributed almost all over the world. They are widely read by politicians, congressmen, government officials and the intellectual elites. They are also well structured and organized in terms of personnel and qualified correspondents.

The three newspapers were chosen from three different countries to draw some comparisons and reach some conclusions about patterns of coverage and news directions. It should be noted here that the foreign policies of the United States, France and the United Kingdom vis-à-vis the Arab world and the Middle East are not monolithic. The three countries have different interests in the region and look at it from different perspectives. The newspapers themselves differ in terms of correspondents based in the region, editorial policy and news selection and processing.

Selection of Time periods

Two different time periods were selected for the purpose of this study. The first one October 8 – 12, 1973 was marked by the October war, which broke out on October 6. The second major event in this period was the oil crisis and the talks among the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) members to solve this problem. This period affords a good sample, since it contains conflicting and controversial events that attract the attention of the foreign press in the region.

The second time period, January 5 – 9, 1976, was a stable period of time during which there was no direct conflict between the west and the Arabs or the state of Israel and the Arabs. Unlike the first period, the second period does not represent a time span where the economic and political interests of the west are menaced.

The Content Analysis Method

The content analysis method has strengths as well as weaknesses. In some instances, it is very hard for the researcher to get rid of his subjectivity. When researchers are dealing with directionality in their analysis, most of the time they find themselves with peculiar cases. The item they are content-analyzing fits neither this direction nor the other one. Berelson comments on this issue :

Although direction is a commonly recognized characteristic of communication content, it is not always easily analyzed in an objective fashion. Many textual passages are not clearly pro or con or neutral, the borderline is often indistinct.²⁰

This is to say that deciding on direction in content analysis is one of the biggest problems facing the researcher, because it is one area in which the element of subjectivity is difficult to eliminate. But this does not undermine the usefulness of content analysis to mass communication research. Merely determining whether there is direction or not in a news item is productive and useful.²¹ For the purpose of this study a special emphasis is put on the definition of the categories of direction to limit subjectivity. Definitions are mainly drawn from past research dealing with the portrayal of Arabs.

Unit of Analysis

News articles, editorials, features and cartoons dealing with the twenty-two Arab countries were coded for directionality. The unit of analysis was the whole item whether it is a news article, feature, editorial or a cartoon. The three categories of directionality are : favorable, unfavorable, and neutral.

Definition of Categories

Favorable — An article is considered to be favorable if its general stance is positive toward the Arabs, employing terms, adjectives, adverbs and attributes that are favorable to Arabs. These are items that reflect political and economic stability, cohesion, and cooperation. Examples of positive adjectives are the following : lawful, unified, successful, moral, intelligent, positive, good, hardworking, thorough, brave, honest, self confident, democratic, Western-oriented, open-minded and pacifist.

Unfavorable — An article is considered unfavorable if it describes or portrays Arabs in a negative way displaying hostility and overemphasizing negative aspects of Arabs. Items report on disorganization, instability, weakness and social unrest. Negative attitudes were also reflected in such terms as : dictatorial attitudes, associated with communism, anti-Western attitude, untrustworthy, unreliable, inexperienced, naive, nomadic living, low standard of living, women few rights, low standard of education, undemocratic, dishonest, disunited, contentious, uncooperative, belligerent, wrong and weak.

Neutral — An item is considered neutral if it displays a balance of positive and negative arguments. This category encompasses articles that present both sides of the story or the event avoiding value-laden adjectives, stereotypes and prejudices. Such items do not reflect any favorable or unfavorable emphasis toward the issue.

Hypotheses

H1 : According to the Manipulative model of communication, news organizations operate under the pressure of the large oil conglomerates, multinational corporations, interest groups and powerful political lobbies. Therefore, in the first time period — oil embargo and War — the three countries put some pressures on the prestigious media. The objective of the economic forces, here, is to solve the problem with the Arabs and to create a good atmosphere to resume business.

H2 : During the second time period, given the fact that all three countries (the United States, France and the United Kingdom) support the state of Israel explicitly or implicitly, the three newspapers portray Arabs in a negative way. The political forces (interest groups, lobbies, political parties) intervene and pressure the media to follow the path that the govern-

ment pursues in its foreign policy. The economic forces in this period tend to support the political ones.

H3 : According to the Market model the coverage does not vary in both time periods and both arguments and sides of the issues covered are presented. There is no pro— or anti-Arab stance from the three prestigious newspapers. There is no pressure and leverage from any kind of forces and powers in the society on the media.

Research Questions

Q1 : how did the portrayal of Arabs compare in the two periods?

Q2 : How did the portrayal of Arabs compare among the three prestigious newspapers?

Q3 : How was the overall portrayal of Arabs in the three newspapers?

Q4 Which kind of communication model — Manipulative or Market — is supported or refuted by the findings of this study?

Presentation of the Findings

Coder Reliability —Three editorials (one from each newspaper) and twenty-seven news stories (nine from each newspaper) were randomly selected and coded by an independent coder. Holsti's formula was used to determine the reliability.²² The reliability coefficient reached was .90, which is considered to be highly satisfactory.

Volume and Direction of Coverage

Table 1 shows a large disparity in the coverage of events involving Arabs in 1973 and 1976. During five days in 1973 the three dailies carried 155 stories, nine editorials, seven features and no cartoons. In 1976 for the same period of time — five days — there were thirty-nine news stories, one editorial, one feature and no cartoons at all.

The second significant Finding is the difference in the direction of news coverage in the three newspapers in the first time period. Forty-two point one percent (42.1%) of the news stories in *The New York Times* were unfavorable to Arabs, while only four point eight percent (4.8%) of *Le Monde's* news items and fourteen point two percent (14.2%) of *The Times of London* news stories were unfavorable to Arabs. On the other hand, both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* reported Arab events in a neutral way (89.8% and 85.7% respectively). *The New York Times*, however was neutral in only 50.8% of its news stories.

TABLE 1

**Favorable, Unfavorable and Neutral Portrayal of Arabs in *The New York Times*,
Le Monde, and *The Times of London*
(1973, 1976)**

Type of Coverage	The New York Times				Le Monde				The Times of London			
	1973		1976		1973		1976		1973		1976	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
New Articles	57	100	9	100	49	100	19	100	49	100	11	100
Favorable	4	7.01	—	—	3	6.12	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unfavorable	24	42.10	2	22.22	2	4.8	—	—	7	14.28	—	—
Neutral	29	50.87	7	77.77	44	89.80	19	100	42	85.71	11	100
Editorials	4	100	00	100	3	100	1	100	2	100	00	100
Favorable	—	—	—	—	1	33.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unfavorable	1	25.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	50	—	—
Neutral	3	75.0	—	—	2	66.3	1	100	1	50	—	—
Features	3	100	00	100	2	100	1	100	2	100	00	100
Favorable	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unfavorable	2	66.3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Neutral	1	33.3	—	—	2	100	1	100	2	100	—	—
Cartoons	00	100	00	100	00	100	00	100	00	100	00	100
Favorable	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Unfavorable	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Neutral	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Due to rounding error, percentages may not add up to 100%.

In the second time period (1976), the news from both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* was neutral (100%), while only 77.77% of *The New York Times* coverage was impartial. The rest of the news stories was unfavorable to Arabs (22.22%).

Editorials: Only nine editorials were found in the three newspapers of this study in the first time period — four in *The New York Times*, three in *Le Monde* and two in *The Times of London*. The U.S. and British newspapers published one unfavorable editorial each, and were neutral in the rest, while *Le Monde* reported one favorable editorial and two neutral. In the second time period only *Le Monde* published one editorial which was neutral. Both *The New York Times* and *The Times of London* didn't have editorials dealing with Arab issues.

Features: Very few feature stories were published by the three newspapers — a total of seven. Two out of three of *The New York Times* feature stories were unfavorable. Both the

British and the French newspapers showed a neutrality in their feature stories. No single cartoon was published by the three prestigious dailies in either period of time.

Discussion

To answer the main question of this study, it can be said that the portrayal of Arabs in *The New York Times*, *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* did differ. The two European papers were mostly neutral in their coverage, while the U.S. newspaper was unfavorable in one third of its stories. In terms of number of stories covered, *The New York Times* carried more stories than *Le Monde* and *The Times of London*, in the first time period. However, in the second time period, *Le Monde* carried the largest number of stories. The overall number of stories covered by the three newspapers in both time periods was the same for *The New York Times* and *Le Monde* (68 stories), while *The Times of London* carried a total of 60 stories.

Concerning the comparison of the portrayal of Arabs in the two time periods, it can be asserted that the direction of news changed moderately. The percentage of unfavorable news in *The New York Times* dropped from 42.10 percent in the first time period to 22.22 percent in the second period. Here, it can be argued that in times of stability, the direction of news tends to lean toward neutrality. However, the difference in the number of news stories — 57 in the first period and 9 in the second one — leads us to make some reservations about this difference in the direction of the news. One can argue that this difference is due to the variance in the distribution of the news.

Concerning the overall portrayal of Arabs in all three newspapers, it can be asserted that the coverage was mostly neutral in the two European newspapers (93.39%). However in *The New York Times* the percentage of neutral news was only 64.32, and in the first time period it was only 50.87 percent.

The fourth question of this study addresses the issue : in which kind of theoretical framework can one explain and speculate about the coverage done by the three newspapers. It can be argued that for both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* the Market model of communication seems to fit very well. Very few stories were unfavorable or favorable to Arabs. This indicates, at least from the findings of this study, that the political and economic forces in both France and England did not exert any kind of pressure on the two elite newspapers of these two countries or, if they did, they didn't affect the direction of news and the quality of coverage in *Le Monde* and *The Times of London*. This leads us to conclude that the Manipulative model of communication is not operational in the elite newspapers of both France and England. Thus, the first hypothesis of this study is refuted by the findings of both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London*. On the other hand, data on these two newspapers do support the third hypothesis — validity of the Market model of communication.

The second hypothesis is also refuted by the findings of this study. The three newspapers didn't show any shift toward unfavorable stance in the coverage of Arabs in the second time period. Contrarily, the percentage of neutral news in *The New York Times* augmented from 50.87 percent in the first period to 77.77 percent in the second period. Therefore, one can conclude that the Manipulative model of communication does not work at all in France and England and works only to some extent in the United States.

With some reservations, it can be asserted that in times of conflict and crisis *The New York Times* tends to portray Arabs in a negative way. This may explain that the Manipulative model

does find some support in the United States. One can argue that *The New York Times* reflects the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East and the indisputable U.S. support to Israel. This contradicts both the first and the second hypothesis of this study. Contrary to hypothesis number two, *The New York Times* was less favorable to Arabs in times of economic and political crisis than it was in times of stability.

Overall it can be said that the findings of this study do not give any strong evidence for the validity and operation of the Manipulative model in both France and England. This may be explained by the foreign policies of both France and the United Kingdom. Both countries are less supportive to the State of Israel than the United States. In addition, they both have strong ties with Arab countries which used to be their colonies in the past. In the case of the United States, it can be asserted that findings of the first time period (1973) lend some support to the Manipulative model — 42.1 percent of unfavorable news. However, the findings of the second time period (1976) do not support the model at all.

While coding the items from the three newspapers, the author of this study noted some differences among the three papers concerning the number of correspondents based in the region and the country from which they cover the news. Both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* had correspondents in Cairo, Jerusalem, Damascus and Beirut, while *The New York Times* had its correspondents based most of the time in Jerusalem. This concentration of U.S. journalists in Jerusalem may affect to some extent the credibility of the coverage. Furthermore, unlike the U.S. newspaper, both *Le Monde* and *The Times of London* had a substantial number of correspondents in the region. This may be explained by the colonial ties that both France and England enjoy with the Arab World. It may also explain the difference in the coverage between the French and British newspapers and *The New York Times*. Most of *The New York Times* stories were datelined in Jerusalem.

The findings of this study also suggest that the Arab World attracts the attention of the Western media in times of crisis, war, and conflict. In the first time period (oil embargo and War) 155 stories were reported in the three newspapers of this study. However, in the second time period (stability) the three newspapers carried only 39 news stories. This pattern of foreign news coverage is found all over the globe and not only in the Middle East. This finding is widely known among the advocates of the New International Information Order, and it is one of their main concerns.

All in all, the findings of this study invite the academic community to work and develop new models of communication that may explain systematically and scientifically the mechanisms of news selection and foreign coverage patterns in the news organizations. The Market and the Manipulative model of communications used in this study seemed to be broad in their explanations. Both models go too far in their justifications and explanations of how the media operates. A complex theory of news selection and operation is to be developed. Closer look to the newsrooms, journalists' background, journalists' education, their understanding of world politics, their mastering of foreign languages can contribute fruitfully to the understanding of such mechanisms. The audience also may be an important variable to consider for the formulation of a communication model.

How to improve the portrayal of Arabs in the Western media and particularly in the United States? This is an important question that every Arab should think about. Arabs should facilitate the task of foreign journalists who cover the Middle East. Many foreign correspondents have complained about facing many difficulties to get visas and access to sources and informa-

tion. Arab embassies and Arab citizens in Europe and the United States should do their best to correct the distortions and to present and expose their culture and civilization. Arabs should sit at the table with the Western journalist and give their side of the story. They must be organized and well articulated in presenting their cause. They must put an end to their indifference and skepticism toward foreign journalists, diplomats and politicians.

Western news organizations and particularly the U.S. should pay more attention to the credibility of sources they rely on and the background and language proficiency of their correspondents in the Middle East. Correspondents should get rid of any kind of stereotypes, prejudices, value-laden judgments and false information when reporting about Arab-Israeli conflicts and issues.

Notes

- 1 Edmund Chareeb, (ed.) *Split Vision : The Portrayal of Arabs in the American Media*. (Washington, D.C. : American-Arab Affairs Council, 1983), p. 8.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 Henri Lefebvre, *Critique de La Vie Quotidienne*, Tome II. (Paris : Arche Editeur, 1961), p. 226.
- 4 Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (eds.), *The Manufacture of News : Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*. (Beverly Hills, CA : Sage Publications, 1974), p. 17.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Clauss Mueller, *The Politics of Communication* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 87.
- 8 Michael W. Suleiman, "An Evaluation of Middle East News Coverage in Seven American Newsmagazines, July-December 1956." *Middle East Forum*, XLI : 2, p. 29 (1956).
- 9 Michael W. Suleiman "American Mass Media and the June Conflict," Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (ed), *The Arab Israeli Confrontation of June 1967 : An Arab Perspective* (Evanston, IL : Northwestern University Press, 1980), pp. 138-154.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 147.
- 11 Janice Terry and Gordon Mendenhall, "1973 U.S. Press Coverage on the Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 4 : 123 (1974).
- 12 David Daugherty and Michael Warden, "Prestige Press Editorial Treatment of the Mideast During 11 Crisis Years," *Journalism Quarterly*, V 56 (4) : 782, (1979)..
- 13 David Sreebny, "American Correspondents in the Middle East : Perceptions and Problems," *Journalism Quarterly*, V 56 (2) : 387 (1979).
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