

The Factors behind the Stereotyped Image of Arab Muslim Woman in Western Media: An Arab Academic Elite Perspective

DR. AZZA ABDUL-AZIZ ABDULLAH OSMAN

Professor in Media Department
Faculty of Arts - Sohag University - Upper Egypt

Introduction:

The image of Arabs and Muslims, in general throughout history, passed through several stages. The image of the Arabs, before the emergence of Israel, was the following: beauty, pyramids and dancing girls. After the Arab-Israeli conflict, it turned to describe the Arab as a backward, dishonest and extremist person who is characterized by laziness. After the 1967 war, the image changed to focus more on the image of the Arab leadership which reflected the image of corruption and favoritism. With the beginning of the Palestinian liberation movement, the image of the Arab in the West changed into the image of the terrorist and the extremist. (1)

During the decades of the eighties and nineties, the two books: "The Clash of Civilizations" by "Huntington" (2) and "The End of History" by "Fukuyama" (3) appeared. They focused on the emergence of Islam as a hostile force against the West and the Western civilization, all the other cultures and civilizations no longer exist and the Western civilization has remained and will remain and it represents the final chapter of the human history.

The events of the eleventh of September provided a valuable opportunity

for many of the Western writers to present Islam in a frightening image that threatens all the major gains such as the intellectual and political freedom, the freedom of belief and the freedom of woman. Islam, as shown by the Western press coverage, represents a full contrast of the prevailing values and attitudes in the modern West. If the West is filled with the values of freedom, tolerance and openness, the world of Islam is equivalent to the isolation, violence and intolerance. This is in addition to the emergence of the Muslim woman in the Western media as a tool employed to distort the image of Islam and Muslims.

The explosions of the eleventh of September sparked an overwhelming wave of hatred against the Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular. The former American President George W. Bush led his campaign against Islam under the name of the war on terrorism. (4)

Thus, what is called (Islamophobia) appeared. It is the state of fear of Islam that prevailed in the Western societies and this term reflects and summarizes the nature of the common misunderstanding between both of the Islamic and the Western worlds. (5)

In addition to the non-neutrality and the continuous attack against the other

that characterizes the media policy in both of the Arab and the Western worlds.

The Western media still portrays the Arab and Islamic societies as if they live according to the beliefs and traditions dating back to the middle ages. It also focuses particularly on the writings developed by the unfair orientalist on the issue of equality between men and woman in Islamic Sharia. In this connection, they accuse Islam that it does not give woman the right of equality with man, but they consider that the status of woman in Islam is below the man. They highlight these allegations that say that the Quranic speech decides that the man is better than the woman and they quoted with what is stated in the words of Allah (Men are protectors and maintainers of woman). The Western media also deliberately quoted some Quranic verses that are out of the framework of the integrated Quranic text by dividing them to be interpreted in line with its previous attitude. (6)

The image of the expatriate Muslim and Arab woman in the American media, for example, is still that stereotyped and traditional one for the ignorant and backward woman who is covered with veil. She is also the weak woman who does not come out of the house under the oppression and humiliation of her husband or relatives. She is always hit and insulted for the most trivial reasons, and she is killed wrongfully and aggressively for the crimes of honor. (7)

The American media and press believe that the Arab women are isolated because of Islam which imposes the honor crimes, the sex segregation and the veil on the culture, beliefs and mind of the Arab world. (8)

As the researcher Arzu Merali thinks, the Muslim woman has become, for the Western journalists, a model of back-

wardness and persecution. She quoted with some of the Western writers and their intensive attack against the Muslim woman. She confirmed that this attack is characterized with the exaggeration and the radical handling which lacks the objectivity by portraying this woman as a victim of the so-called Islamic terrorism. The Muslim woman, in the perspective of these journalists, should get rid of this religion, and when she does this, she will get rid of the veil that covers her from head to feet. This attack by the western media against the Muslim woman is not justified because the Western woman suffers from a lot of problems. This researcher wonders why there are no Western writers who resolve the Western woman's problems instead of criticizing and attacking the Muslim one. (9)

The observers for many Western writings touch the full aggression on Islam in order to criticize it as a constitution, method and legislation, and consider it as a stumbling block in the way of progress for the woman. For example, Edward Pkington criticized, in the Guardian Newspaper, the provisions of Islamic Sharia describing them that they are radical because they allow the man to marry four women while this is not allowed for the woman. He criticized the punishment for adultery, and he pointed out that the prohibition of mixing and wearing the veil reflects the wrong practices of the faith and this is not from Islam, but it is the domination of men. He also expressed his frustration at the men of Hisbah for preventing the young men from mixing with the young girls in the markets and the public places. (10)

Saudi Arabia is the most Arab and Muslim country that has been focused on, from the part of the American media, especially in the woman's issues. It focuses on the woman passivity and her satisfaction with the suppression against her, from head to feet like the ghosts. It also focuses on that the Saudi woman has no right in many of the natural

things including the right for choosing her husband, driving or the political participation. (11) Barbra Slavin expressed, in The USA News, her hope that the events of September might be the cause for making clear cultural changes in the kingdom and the Saudis have to reconsider the issue of sex segregation and the restrictions imposed on woman such as the veil and travelling without a mahram. (12)

In New York Times newspaper, the journalist Nichols Christoph also gave the Saudi Arabian women the title of the black ghosts and she is classified in the West as (the archaeological doormat that is covered in black). (13)

This is in addition to the focus of the American media largely, under the pressures of the commercial factors, on the abnormal accidents in the Saudi society such as the rape accidents that are dealt with in a strange way by the Saudi authorities. There are two famous stories that have been focused on. The first one is the Saudi judgment that punished a girl aged 19 years, who was raped by six men, with twenty lashes. The justification of the Saudi judgment was because she traveled without a mahram and the penalty was doubled because she spoke with the media about her story.

The second story dealt with by the American media exaggeratedly was the Saudi judgment on an old woman, who was over seventy years, with 40 lashes for hosting two strange men without a mahram, and this case was published only in the American press. (14)

It was not only limited to the Saudi Arabia, but CNN also criticized the government of Kashmir for applying the provisions of Sharia by closing liquor stores and cinemas and asking women to be obliged to the proper hijab. (15)

In addition to this, the radio speech of Mrs. Bush reported by CNN channel. She described the life of woman in Afghanistan as a cruel and humiliating one, even showing less fun is not al-

lowed. Children are not allowed to play with kites and women face punishment when they laugh loudly and they are unable to work outside their home or not even leaving the house alone. (16)

The Western media still puts the Arab Muslim woman in the form of the captive who is exposed to abuses and pressures because of customs, traditions and the Arab culture. The double standards are from the things known widely in the Western media, especially in dealing with the issues of Muslims in general, and in the issue of the Muslim woman in particular.

Therefore, we should be aware of the purpose of what is presented in the Western media and the true dimensions for targeting the Muslim woman especially she has become a major part from the project of the great powers and the international authorities for the cultural and social change in the region. We must understand that attack against the Muslims and recognize its dimensions, then knowing the mechanisms to deal with. The stereotyped image is generalizations that are based on rumors or the opinions that are based on experimental scientific evidences. (17) It should be emphasized here that the media alone does not make or change the stereotyped image, but there are other institutions working in this direction and seek to achieve it. They provide the raw material and information that are used to form the stereotyped image of the society. The media adopt, shape and formulate these materials into appropriate media materials and programs that can be relied on in making, changing, modifying or confirming the mental image of the societies, nations and institutions. (18)

Previous studies:

There are many studies that focused on the mental image of Islam or the Arabs and Muslims, and other studies focused on clarifying the image of the Arab woman in the Arab media in all its forms and very few of them are interested in the image of the Arab Muslim

woman in the Western media. With regard to the studies that focused on the mental image of Islam, Muslims and Arabs (Mahmoud Abdel Atty 1992 on the image of the Muslim world in the foreign broadcasts oriented in Arabic (19), Abdul Qader Tash 1993 on the image of Islam in the Western media (20), kasif sheikh 1995 (21), Jack G Shaheen 1997 - Arab and Muslim Stereotyping in American popular culture (22), Marey Madkour 1998 on the recent trends in the researches of the mental image of the Muslim world in the Western (23), Canadian Islamic Congress 1998-Anti-Islam in the media (24), Michael Sulci-man 1999 - Islam Muslims Arabs America (25), Yahiya Kamalipower 2000 (26), Bassil Akel 2001 (27), Elisabeth Poole 2001 (28), Louay M Safi (29), Wayne Wanta 2003 (30). All these studies have shown that impression in the West about the Arabs and Muslims (terrorists - fundamentalists - extremists - aggressors - oppressors - dictators ----- etc.). In addition to their description for the Arab leaders with passive qualities such as (Vampire - opportunist - head of a terrorist gang - terrorist ---- etc.). These studies also provided, through the presentation of the Western media, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, as the person who broke the grip of Christianity and he deserves the strongest punishment and described his provisions as radical and religiously fanatic. These studies also presented several descriptions for the Arab through their analysis for the media. The Arab is an evil and his first interest is to hijack the aircrafts and blow up buildings, and the Arab is a millionaire, a terrorist or a roisterer. Islam in the Western media is the religion of intolerance and terrorism and it threatens the Western civilization. It is also the religion of violence which does not know tolerance, and this religion practices the discrimination against the Muslim woman. She does not have any rights compared to the Muslim men who have all the rights. These studies also showed that the polit-

ical events played a role in determining the direction of the press coverage of the Western newspapers. In addition, some of these studies monitored the causes of the distortion of the image of the Arabs and Muslims such as the intolerance against Islam, and then the Western media staff does not know Islam because there is not any Arab or Muslim who provides the right image. There are also the political considerations, the fear about interests and the movements of Orientalism.

On the other hand, the studies that focused on the image of the Arab Woman in the Arab media appeared such as: (Nahed Ramzy, 1991 "The dimensions of the behavior of woman as presented by the stories of the woman press" (31), Basema Sokareia , Leila Ghandour 1996 "The image of the Arab woman in the woman magazines - the model of Lebanon" (32), Awatef Abdel-Rahman, "The image of woman in Egyptian newspapers and magazines " (33), Salwa Mohammed Abdul Baqi, "The image of the Egyptian woman" - A study for analyzing the content of some radio programs" (34), Adib Khasour "The image of woman in the Arab media"(35), Zagh-lulah Al-Salem 1992 " The image of the Arab woman in the television drama" (36), Samir Farid, "The image of woman in the Arab cinema" (37), Nahawand Isa Al-Qadri 1995 "Woman between the printed media and the visual one, the Lebanese case" (38). The Arab woman, as portrayed by the Arab media, lacks the mental ability in the field of thought, knowledge and the scientific mentality. She is also the woman who looks for help and support from the man because she is not able to solve problems, and lacks the ability to act. She is the woman who is not capable of planning or making a decision. Films often presented the woman as a female only and they also focused on the deviant woman: a prostitute, a member of gang, a pickpocket, a beggar ----- etc. The studies have also shown the use of the image of Arab woman in the advertisements as a tool

for attracting, a bait for encouraging the consumption. In any case, they show the woman as a naive creature who is only interested in eating, drinking and making up.

On the third hand, there are the studies that focused on the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media (Mohamed Al-Hawary, 2004 "The image of Muslim woman in the Western media" (39), Hanaa Saleh Al-Turk, 2007 "The veiled women in the advertisements of the Satellite channels are specialized in cooking and cleaning bathrooms" (40). They show that the Western media portrays the Muslim woman as a woman dominated by a parental, male, unfair and oppressive society. This society imposed wearing hijab and covering her face and all her body. It will not allow her to work because it sees that her only function in life is marriage and having children for her husband. At the same time, her husband does not treat her with any respect because she is always lower in his eyes, and then he denies her rights. Hanaa Al-Turk concluded that the presentation of a stereotyped image of woman in advertising has a significant impact on the distortion of the society for assessing the woman. These studies returned the distortion of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media to several reasons including: The radical and non-normal treatment for women in some Muslim countries and the Western media intentionally portray some of the practices and the social behaviors that it thinks they are strange to its culture and highlights and magnifies them using a selective method and presents that as if it was a tradition practiced throughout the Islamic world.

The Theoretical Approach of the Study:

The study is based on the theory of the Symbolic Interactionism:

The writings of both G. H. Mead and Chales H. Cooley are considered from the most important writings that developed the basic determinants of the

theory of the Symbolic Internationalism. Both writers were interested in the images that built by the individuals in their minds about the social life, and the processes by which people develop their ideas about themselves or the others. They considered these ideas as indicators for the social behavior.

If the focus was on addressing the perspective of the Symbolic Internationalism on the human communication in general and its relationship with building meanings in the minds of people and the impact of this building on communication again. The media has become the main means that provides these meanings and interpretations for people, especially people build their ideas about the truth while they have not actually seen it. However they relied on the media in shaping these ideas about the facts. So people build the meanings or the image about the social or material facts that they have not felt through following the media, therefore their self-behavior and attitudes are determined by these meanings and perceptions that the media contributed in assessing and shaping them. They are considered the main source, and almost it is the only one for many sectors of the public, of knowledge and information about facts, objects and people contained by the environment surrounding these sectors. (41) The Western media plays a clear role in forming a certain image for the Muslim Arab woman and creating certain perceptions about people towards the Arab Muslim woman that may not be true or far from reality. Our study focuses on the variation between the reality and the image that the Western media portrays for the Muslim woman, what are the reasons for this variation and what are the factors that affect it? Are they political, economic or religious pressures and who are the beneficiaries from the existence of this variation between the reality and the image portrayed by the media for the Arab-Muslim woman?

Hypotheses of the Theory:

1) The growing role of the media so that it coordinates the roles, or takes the leading roles for spreading information or distributing knowledge.

2) For meaningful or non-meaningful reasons, the presentation of this information or knowledge, facts or images, does not agree in many cases with the true reality. The result is to spread false images or distorted facts about this reality.

3) Due to the growing role of the media and its sovereignty in the field of the presentation of facts and its dissemination, the individuals in the society rely on shaping the mental image of these distorted or biased facts, without exerting any additional efforts to compare these mental images with the true reality.

4) With the effect of accumulation in publishing and broadcasting over the time, these facts published by the media (about the Arab Muslim woman) turn out to be social facts that individuals in the society agree about their symbols and preview them by the impact of the symbolic interaction.

5) Through the methods of the cultural analysis, these distorted facts or false images can be inferred, but they contribute, over the time and after the social agreement, in the processes of change in the society and its members are affected by them in the cultural and social structure.

Methodological and Procedural Framework of the Study

Problem of the study:

From reviewing the previous studies, we find that the majority of these studies has reduced the way for improving the image or the factors of its distortion in one question raised at the end of each study. The focus was on the description of the image and the researches were characterized by repetition from this angle. The two questions (why and how) were almost absent from the studies of the image of the woman in the Western media, even though they were found scattered and in a superficial and theo-

retical form in few researches, and the researches of the image of the Arabs and Muslims in general in the Western media were characterized by the same thing. Because the absence of the causes of the image distortion is linked largely with the internal and political factors that the researchers preferred to avoid either for safety or the difficulty of monitoring them. Therefore, this study focused on examining the two dimensions of the reasons for the formation of the stereotyped image of the Muslim Arab woman in the Western media and the strategy for improving it with reviewing the first dimension (The description of the image) because it is an introduction for the study. Thus, the present study monitors and analyzes the factors of the formation of the stereotyped image of the Muslim Arab woman in the Western media, as well as the formulation of a future vision to improve this image.

Importance of the study:

The importance of the study comes from being the first study that examines the causes and factors of the formation of the stereotyped image of the Muslim Arab woman in the Western media from the reality of the vision of the Arab academic elite who had the conditions for the accommodation and living in the western countries for several years so that they can have the experience and the ability for the objective evaluation of the image and then the factors of its distortion.

Objectives of the Study:

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Monitoring, analyzing and explaining the features of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.
- Monitoring, analyzing and explaining the religious factors that are responsible for shaping the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.
- Monitoring, analyzing and explaining the political factors that are re-

responsible for shaping the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.

- Monitoring, analyzing and explaining the media factors that are responsible for shaping the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.

- Knowing the sources of shaping the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.

- Trying to explain the significance for determining a certain image of the Arab Muslim woman and neglecting other images in the Western media.

- Knowing the type of the media forms in which the Western media deals with the distorted image of the Arab Muslim woman.

- Identifying the ways by which the Western media deals with the distorted image of the Arab Muslim woman.

- Determining how to correct the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media by developing a strategy to do so.

Questions of the Study:

The study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the features of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

- What are the religious factors that are responsible for the distortion of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

- What are the political factors that are responsible for the distortion of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

- What are the media factors that are responsible for the distortion of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

- What are the sources for shaping the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

- What is the significance for devoting specific images of the Arab Muslim woman and neglecting other images

in the Western media?

- What is the kind of the media forms in which the Western media deals with the distorted image of the Arab Muslim woman?

- What are the methods of treatment used by the Western media in the presentation of this distorted image of the Arab Muslim woman?

- What is the strategy for correcting the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media?

Type of the Study:

This study belongs to the type of the descriptive studies that aim to identify, analyze and evaluate the characteristics of the image and the factors that cause its formation quantitatively and qualitatively in order to get the accurate and sufficient information about it.

Concepts of the Study:

The stereotype means the repeated thing in a manner that does not change, or the thing that agrees with a consistent or general pattern, and lacks the distinctive individual features. It is also the mental image which is jointly carried by the members of some group, and it represents a simplified opinion to the extent of the distorted overuse or an emotional situation (from a person, a presentation, an issue or an incident). Therefore, the stereotype is more specific in its significance on the mental fixed image which is characterized by stiffness and oversimplification. The stereotype is often considered a following stage from the stages of the formation of the mental images that a person has about the other persons, groups and things "1". Thus, the term of the stereotype is considered more accurate significance, broader concept and much closer to the objectives of this study which does not seek to examine the absolute mental image that build on the transient impressions about the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media, but they study the factors of the formation of that repeated image about the Muslim woman over the centuries and generations.

The stereotype is characterized by the

generalizations that are based on rumors or the opinions that are not based on scientific experimental evidences, and therefore it is built on illusions, inaccurate information, or self-imaginings that were formed in human or the group through the past experience and expertise and through receiving from the means of communication and media. The nature of the stereotype - on this basis - is that it is full of self-feelings and filled with the personal emotions which are difficult to be changed or easily refuted "2".

The stereotype of peoples and nations about the others is a complex process that many factors overlap in its formulation. This process also takes the time that may extend to many generations. Therefore, it is necessary to identify how the stereotypes are formed in the individual and group mind, and try to explore the factors that affect them and the means that help the individual and the group to form the stereotypes in their minds.

Method of the Study:

The study is based on the method of the social survey on a sample of the Arab academic elite.

Tools of the Study:

- The standardized interviews using a survey form and the non-standardized interviews.

- The simple observation and the observation with participation.

Population of the Study:

This study was conducted on a sample of the Arab academic elite who lives in Riyadh and work in the following universities: King Saud University, Imam Mohammed Bin Saud University and Princess Noura University. The academic elite are considered an excellent one in our Arab societies because of its important role in raising awareness and correcting concepts. They are also considered active audience in the process of perception and absorption of knowledge and information. They are with a high degree of education and culture and they are interested in contributing to the for-

mulation and elaboration of the determinants and measures to improve the Arab image. (42)

Sample Size and the Way of Its Selection:

The size of the sample consisted of 100 members according to the studies of the elite. It was taken into account that the sample stayed an enough period in the Western countries to be able to evaluate the image of woman in the Western media. It was also taken into account that they belong to a number of Arab universities, and the diversity of the academic degree of the sample of the study (lecturer, assistant professor and professor).

The study was applied on the following universities: King Saud University, Imam Mohammed Bin Saud University and Princess Noura University. These universities were selected because the researcher works now at King Saud University in Riyadh and the teaching staff members are from different Arab countries and it was difficult to reach them. This helped the application of the questionnaire on the teaching staff members who are from six different Arab nationalities; Egyptian, Saudi, Syrian, Palestinian, Sudanese and Iraqi. The number of universities, that the study sample belongs to, reached ----- universities.

Type of Sample:

A random and available sample was taken from the teaching staff members at the following universities: King Saud University, Imam Mohammed Bin Saud University and Princess Noura University. One hundred forms were distributed on the male and female respondents in the three universities, but there were 18 questionnaires that were excluded because they did not achieve the degree of reliability required, and therefore the sample becomes 82 male and female respondents.

The Applied Framework of the Research: Results of the Field Study

• Characteristics of the Study Sample

• Academic Qualification

The degree of assistant professor was the highest percentage in the study sample and it reached (60.1%) occupying the first place, while the lecturer category reached (20.7%) occupying second place, and the professor category was in the third place with a percentage of (18.3%).

• Age Variable

The age group from 45 to less than 55 represented the majority of the sample with a percentage of (34.1%), while the age group from 35 to less than 45 occupied the second place of the sample with a percentage of (29.3%). These two groups falls below the category of the professor and the assistant professor, while the group from 25 to less than 35 occupied the third place by (26.8%) and to which the lecturer group belongs and this is the youth generation.

• According to the Variable of Sex

The percentage of females was more than the males'. It reached (63.4%), while the percentage of males reached (36.6%) occupying the second place.

• According to the Variable of the Marital Status

The major percentage of the sample was married and it occupied the first place by (56.1%), followed by the category of the unmarried in the second place with a percentage of (25.6%). The category the divorcees occupied the third place by (20.7%), while the category of the widows came fourth and last with a percentage of (17.1%).

• Purpose of Travel:

The study showed that the major percentage of the sample whose purpose of travel was to study (scholarships) and its percentage reached (53.8%). The second category whose purpose of travel was to spend vacations reached (26.1%), while those whose purpose of travel was to work in Western countries came in the third place by 26%.

• Exposure to the Media in the Country of Residence:

The study showed that the major per-

centage of the sample was exposed to the media permanently in the country of residence with a percentage of (82.9%), while the percentage that did not expose to the media in the country of residence was (10.9%) and it occupied the second place. As for those who were rarely exposed to the Western media were a minority and their percentage was (6.1%). Thus, the dominant percentage of the study sample can clearly evaluate and know the factors that affect the formation of the mental image of Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.

• Number of Hours of the Daily Exposure to the Western Media:

The study showed that a percentage of (61%) of the sample exposed to the media for more than two hours, while a percentage of (31.7%) exposed to the media more than three hours per day. The percentage of those who exposed to Western media for more than four hours per day reached (4.9%). Finally, with few percentage that reached 2.4% from those who exposed to the media more than five hours per day. It is clear that this result is logical and it is compatible with the characteristics and features of the study sample of the Arab elite who lived in the Western countries for academic or working goals. And thus the percentage of their exposure was from two hours to a little more because of their circumstances, but those who were extensively exposed to the media whose percentage was small.

• Favorite Means of the Study Sample:

It was shown that the percentage of 36.3% of the sample preferred watching the television in the country where they lived in the West, while 19.5% preferred the Internet. The preference for reading newspapers came in the third place by 17.1% and finally the foreign radio stations came in the last place by 4.8%.

• Whether the Western Media Portrayed An Image for the Arab Muslim Woman

75.8% of the sample answered (Yes) while 24% answered (No).

- According to the Description of This Image:

85.4% answered that it was a negative image; while 14.6% answered that it was an positive image.

- **The Realistic Image of the Woman and its Approaching from Her Reality:**

And how realistic is that image and its approaching from the reality of the Arab Muslim woman, 53.6% of the sample of the elite answered that the portrayed image of the Arab Muslim woman reflected a reality that was close to the reality of the Arab Muslim woman. And 46.3% of the sample of the elite also answered that the portrayed image was false and it was not related to the reality of the Arab Muslim woman.

- The Features of the Negative Image Portrayed by the Western Media for the Arab Muslim Woman From the Vision of the Academic Elite

The study showed that she was a woman whose hijab was imposed on her and this was the first place by 12.7%, then that she was a weak woman who is subject to a religion that oppresses and suppresses her, and this was in the second place by 12.3%. It is noted here that the religion is the main cause of the negative features of the image of woman. And then in the third place, that she was a woman slaved by men with a percentage of 11.9%. In the fourth place of the features of that image and equally came both that she does not have any legal rights and a woman who is prohibited from practicing her political rights, and both occupied the fourth place by 11.5% for each. In the fifth place and by 11.1% was that her only function was marriage and having children. The negative features follow and the feature about her work is only in the kitchen and housework, and this occupied the sixth place by 10.3%. And then the seventh place by 9.5% was that she is an ignorant and backward woman. Finally, the eighth place was that she is a woman who is a victim of a parental and male religion that hates women with

a percentage of (9.1%).

- Sources of the Formation of the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media:

The study showed that the sources of the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media were as follows:

- The movies occupied the first place by (15.4%) as a source for the formation of the image, and the websites came second with a percentage of 15.2%, followed by the television programs in the third place by 12.8%. The newspaper articles and the news were equal and came in the fourth place with one percentage reached 10.3%, while the published photographs occupied the fifth place by (10.1%). The caricature drawings and books as sources to form the image of the Arab Muslim woman and occupied the sixth place by (9.7%) each, and then the series came to occupy the seventh place by (6.1%)

- The Extent of the Presentation of the Western Media for An Alternative Perception for the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman

(53.7%) answered that there is an alternative perception for this image, while (46.3%) negated the existence of such a perception.

- The Features of the Alternative Perception for the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman As Presented by The Western Media

The perception that the woman is equal to men in everything came as the first alternative images presented by the Western media from the viewpoint of the study sample by (26.4%), followed by the woman liberated from the restrictions of customs and traditions by (19.1%). The woman who rebelled against her husband and society occupied the third place as an alternative image for the Arab Muslim woman with a percentage of (17.6%), while the image of the woman who took off the hijab or she is only satisfied with a simplistic

form of it occupied the fourth place by (14.7%). Then the financially independent woman reached (13.2%) and occupied the fifth place. Finally, the woman who travelled without her husband's permission occupied the sixth and last place by 8.8%.

- About Whether the Alternative Perception of the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman Is Presented in the Western Media.

(58.5%) of the elite sample thought that it is directly presented in the media, while (41.6%) thought that it is not directly presented in the media, but it is hinted in the seminars, conferences, various forums and also in books.

- The Authority That Is Responsible for the Formation of the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media

The elite gave the Arab cinema and the negative image that it portrayed for the Arab Muslim woman the first place with a percentage of (19.3%) as an authority that is responsible for the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media. The second responsible authority was the silence of the Arab woman about everything that happens around her reality by (17.8%). The third place was for the Arab regimes that limit the progress of woman with a percentage of (17%). In the fourth place and with an equal percentage that reached (16.3%) were both of the field of the Arab media which hinders the progress of the media woman because she is faced by males inside the field and the Arab Muslim communities abroad and the negative behaviors that they do towards the woman in the name of Islam. The elite presented, through another category, some authorities which they considered responsible for the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media, and these authorities are as follows:

- The Western media which does not show the true image of the Muslim

woman who believes that Islam is the only religion which guarantees her rights.

- The Jewish businessmen who control a lot of the Western media.

- The Jewish media institutions.

- The programs of the Arab women that present the deprivation of the Arab woman from their right in the society.

- The reality of the Muslim woman is not ideal and it is burdened with racism and the biased culture that hates women.

- Some Arab women imitate the Western woman especially in her negativities.

- The Factors of Formation of This Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media.

The religious factors occupied the first place by 39% as one of the factors that forms the image of the woman, then the political factors came in the second place with a percentage of 31.7% and the media factors were in the third place by 29.3%.

- About the Nature of the Religious Reasons That is Behind the Formation of the Image of Woman in the Western Media, the Elite Presented the Following Reasons:

The cause of the misunderstanding of Islam about the polygamy occupied the first place by 12.6%, followed by the lack of information about the Muslim woman and sometimes its inaccuracy that came in the second place by 12.2%. There are three reasons that came in the third place with an equal percentage that reached 11.3%, and they are: (1) the misunderstanding of the Islamic teachings and traditions about divorce, (2) the misunderstanding of Islam about the woman's inheritance, and (3) the absence of the contemporary balanced female model in the international scene that represents the character of the Muslim woman in her thought and culture.

Then the reason that is related to the hostility of the West towards Islam that

occupied the fourth place by 10.4 as a reason for the distortion of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media. The irresponsible behavior that is done by some of the Muslim women abroad occupied the fifth place by 9.5%. In the sixth place and with a percentage of 8.1%, the woman, in some Arab districts, is sometimes deprived from her inheritance. Also the differences among the doctrines that are related to clothing, marriage, work, and also about the handshake between men and woman that occupied the seventh place by 7.6%. Then the woman, in some Arab societies, is deprived from the responsibility in the promotion of virtue and the prevention of vice, and that came with a percentage of 5.4%.

- The Political Reasons That Are Behind the Formation of the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman In the Western Media: The agreement of the elite on the Western sense of superiority came in the first place by 25.9%, and three factors occupied the second place with equal percentages reached 24.7% for each of them, and they are: The Arab regimes that limit the woman's progress, the weakness of the political effectiveness of the Arab governments, the lack of an active role of the Arab embassies and consulates abroad.

- The Media Reasons That Are Behind the Formation of the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media: The local media blackout about the achievements of the Muslim woman in the Arab countries came in the first place by 16%. What is posed here is the following question: Is the Arab media contacted with the society and reality, or governed by the economic, social and political conditions? And therefore the media discourse cannot be understood in isolation from the political, economic and social regulatory frameworks or the general context in which the processes of the production of this discourse are done. The characteristics of the media means, the quality of journalist staff that

works in it, and the position, direction, mood and the level of awareness of the targeted audience are all the factors that determine the form and content of the discourse that is presented or silenced by the media and which is related to women. (43) The reason that is related to the concentration of the Arab media on the woman's traditional roles as a wife, mother and housewife, and the neglect of producing woman as one of the media reasons that are behind the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media reached 13.6%.

Here we find that the components of the wife's image that the Arab media provide do not appear as the partner of the man, but she is subject to him. It does not present the wife who is equivalent to the man, but it stresses at the image of the subject wife. As for her image as a mother, we find the Arab media deliberately hide the humanitarian and emotional aspect of the motherhood and it focuses on the reproduction as a main function of the mother. It also shows her weak because of her love for her children and thus she is subject to them compared to the absence of the image of mother who has the wise character in bringing up her children.

This reflects the contribution of the Arab media means in the consolidation and immortalization of the prevailing ideas about woman in the Arab world and therefore the views, attitudes, feelings and imagination of those who are responsible for the media organizations and institutions. They create, produce and approve these images (44). This result agrees with the findings of the studies that examine the image of woman in the Arab media. The study of Awatif Abdul Rahman (45) reached the absence of the social issues and the role of woman in the change, the social participation and the political life. In case of the existence of these issues, they address the news only. It is also compatible the study of Salwa Abdul Baqi who reached that the radio materials (housewives pro-

gram, for women only) highlighted woman in the role of the mother by 45.11%, and in the role of a wife by 31.5%. While 33% of the programs highlighted her in the role and place of the female with ignoring her other productive roles (46). The reason that is related to the mutual abuses among the Arab and Muslim countries in the media with regard to the woman's issues occupied the repeated second place by 13.6%. The multiplicity of the Arab regimes, the diversity of their economic, social and cultural structures and their various reference frameworks are issues that imposed a variety and difference in the media, including the starting points, policies, strategies and theories. It has become hopeless (if not impossible) to talk about unified Arab media about most issues, and it is logical to talk about the media of Arab countries that has permanent disagreement and division with regard to the woman's issues. There is the media of the conservative Arab countries which derives its vision about woman from its understanding of the religious texts, and thus imposes a reference framework of the formation of the image of woman in the media. There is the media of the other Arab countries that is mostly with a republican system which represented the national liberation movement and it has chosen, in connection with the issue of woman, a compromising position among the requirements of the texts (with an attempt to introduce an advanced concept for these texts), the requirements of reality and modernity and the requirements of mottos (47). This created the media that is characterized by presenting the mutual abuses instead of the dialogue and debate on the issues of privacy such as the woman's issues.

In the third place, according to the vision of the elite, was the adoption of the Western media of certain patterns about Islam and Muslims such as "extremism, terrorism and fundamentalism" with a percentage of 13%. This result agrees with the study of Edmond Gharib about

the American media and the Arabs. His study found that the caricatured campaigns against the Arabs show them as terrorists or supporters of terrorism (48). Marilyn Nasr also concluded, in her study about the image of the Arabs and Islam in French books that are assigned for the non-scientific materials, that there is a constant feature in the novels of the historical confrontations (49). The Arab race is always the initiator and causer of aggression and the relationship ends with the defeat and failure of the Arabs, and with the victory of the French in all cases. This result also agrees with the results of Samir Garar (50) who subjected "43" books of the social studies in some secondary schools in America for the analysis and he concluded that these books present the Arabs as war and fighting lovers, terrorists and backward.

The reason about the concentration of the Arab movies on presenting a negative image of women and their issues occupied the fourth place by 12.3%. The Arab cinema, in most of its films, presented the woman in a negative image. Samir Farid, in his study on the image of woman in the Arab cinema (51), reached that the Egyptian cinema is a male one that often presents the woman as a female only and devotes the wife with her fertile concept and the motherhood with its generative and caring one. The Arab cinema does not allow the woman to express herself for just being a woman. The titles of Egyptian movies also reflect completely the image of woman in this cinema: The Devil Woman, The Woman Who Defeated Satan, The Devil Is A Woman, Girls Are Sherbet, A Boy and A Girl and The Devil, The Curse of Woman, Girls and Mercedes, A Notorious Woman, A Woman With No Restrictions, A Woman Deceived Me, Suffering Is A Woman, A Virgin But, A Woman But. Although these titles may not suggest exactly the content of these films, but they are with an important significance and they certainly reflected the director's desire to attract the viewer by

suggesting the prevailing ideas about woman because the woman is a devil, deceptive and a hunter who only wants to marry or have fun. The findings of the study of Mona Al-Hadidi, which are about the image of the Egyptian woman in the Egyptian film and the media and social effects that are based on this (52), agrees with the result that we have reached. She concluded that these films present the woman's character as a pale and ill-defined one. They often present the woman as a female only, and they also present the character of the deviant woman who is a prostitute woman, a member in a gang, a pickpocket or a beggar. In addition to presenting the woman in general in most of the films as sex, and the cinema concentrates on this value. It presents her in the image that amuses and enjoys the man and the image a beautiful female who often lacks the education or who is educated but she lacks the logical thinking. She seeks to highlight her physical charms and she is after the man to fall in love and marry her. The Egyptian films contributed and still contribute to the formation of the stereotype of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media. It has a large part of the responsibility to promote this negative stereotype about the Muslim woman, and this shows that the Arab media represented in the Arab cinema adopts the same criteria adopted by the Western media.

The fifth place was for two media reasons that stand behind the formation of that image, and they are: the Arab media portrays the woman as a tool for the sexual enjoyment only, and the consolidation of the model of the woman who always asks for help and support from the man, and this was with a percentage of 11.7% each. The Arab Woman's Media portrays the woman in different roles with a great variation in the degree of interest and concentration. Her female role is in the front and she is the desired female that is needed by men. The danger is that this image is not the realistic one of the woman in the Arab

and Islamic countries. There are many other facts in the woman's life; why they are reduced and denied by the Arab media in favor of one fact only. Finally, we blame the West when they present and consolidate the same images. The consolidation of the image of woman, who derives its existence from the existence of man⁽⁵³⁾ and therefore she does not exist outside the circle of the man, led to falsifying the woman's self-awareness and the man's awareness of her.

• **How to Correct the Image of Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media:**

From the reality of the elite's opinion, the first place was for re-formulation of the philosophy of the Arab media to face those suspicions directed by the Western media against the Muslim woman with a percentage of 51.1%, and the second place was by 48.9% for the need to find a religious philosophy to respond to the West in their claims against the Arab Muslim woman.

The elite added through another category that mentions many of the mechanisms to correct that image, as follows:

- Showing honorable examples for Muslim women and their role in the society and what they arrived to.
- Finding Arab media that believes in the teachings of Islam.
- Directing the Arab funds for the propaganda about the Islamic values and the teachings of true Islam.
- Forming some authorities in the western countries to defend the rights of Muslims and the Muslim woman in particular.
- Training the religious men well in terms of language and the general culture of the country to which they travel to respond to the claims of the West against Islam.
- **Media Philosophy by Which We Can Face Those Suspicions Against the Muslim Arab Woman:**

The elite gave the first place with a percentage of 20.9% for the Arab media discourse have to avoid the exaggeration

and extremism on the issues of the Arab Muslim woman, and also the same percentage and first place for providing the problems that the other concerns with such as (woman / religion / democracy / terrorism, ----- etc.) directly, accurately and unambiguously for the self-defense. The elite gave the second place for the media philosophy that calls that the Arab media discourse has to explain the true women reality with a percentage of 20.2%, then leaving the defending attacking double discourse with one for inside and another for outside, and this was with a percentage of 19.4%. Finally, our prevailing media discourse about women should be reviewed and we have to treat with its imbalance in the self-communication and with others. The elite also added some media philosophies to face the suspicions against the Muslim Arab woman, including:

- Refusing the adoption of the wrong Western ideas and presenting them in the Arab media.
- Showing the successful female figures, both in the Arab and the Western media, such as (the interview of Opera with Queen Rania in her program had a major role in correcting the image of the Arab woman).

• **The Religious Philosophy by Which We Can Face Those Suspicions Against the Muslim Arab Woman:**

The elite focused on that the preacher has to focus on the issue of persuasion so that he can face the concerns of his age and this came in the first place by 19.9%. They also gave the second place and with a percentage of 17.9% for the scientists have to be good at reading the reality. The philosophy that occupied the third place in the elite's opinion and by 17, 2% was to inform the West about Islam in a simple manner and appropriate style for the mentality and psychology of the West. And in an equal place and percentage that reached 15.9%, both of the occurrence of revival in the Muslim mind and working as a team to face the West that consider us backward, and fo-

cus on the fiqh of priorities and not to occupy the nation with trivial matters. In the fifth place and by 13.2% was the need to provide freedom for scientists to move better to serve the religion. In another category, the elite added other features for the religious philosophy to respond to the West, including: To stand firmly against all the insults about the Islamic religion and Muslims by the religious bodies and the Islamic governments and not to waste the rights of Muslims who live in the West.

• **The Possibility to Find Mechanisms That Contribute to Correcting the Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media:**

68.3% from the elite believe that there is a possibility to find a mechanism to correct the image, while 31.7% believed that there is no possibility to find a mechanism to correct the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media.

• **Mechanisms For Correcting The Image of the Arab Muslim Woman in the Western Media:**

The ranking of the elite for these mechanisms is as follows:

The mechanism for the creation of a free Islamic media lobby that is able to convey the voice of Islam and Muslims to the West in their language and this occupied the first place by 18.9%. In the second place and with a percentage of 18.9% came the establishment of research institutes in Europe and America from the Arab Muslim professors, who are residents, to influence the Western public opinion from the reality of the elite's opinion. As for the mechanism for supporting the institutions and programs of the Arab Muslim communities to strengthen its role in the West and this occupied the third place by 17.7%. In the fourth place, both of exposing the Western policy that is against the Arab Muslim woman through the media and the Islamic organizations that work abroad, and informing the West with Islam and its relationship with woman through the embassies, consulates and

cultural offices abroad, with equal percentage reached 15.4% each. The positive situation towards woman of the Muslim communities living in the Western countries occupied the fifth place by 14.3%. The elite added from the reality of another category that mentions other mechanisms that can help in correcting the image of the Arab woman, including: improving the situation of the Muslim woman with the explanation that the suffering of woman is one in most Western and Arab societies, and that the difference is in degree only, sending the qualified women to participate in the academic and cultural conferences abroad and giving a greater role for the Muslim woman abroad to discuss her issues.

This result as whole reflects the importance of the concerted efforts at all the governmental levels, the institutions of the civil society and the media to face the Western claims against the Muslim woman through consistent and agreeable mechanisms at the same time. Those who read carefully the historic march of the West's relations with Islam and Muslims and the followers for the parts of the conflict and its details note the campaign of the constants which ruled the Western view of Islam and Muslims and worked on the increase of the hostility for Islam and the transformation of this hostility into the desire to eliminate the Islamic world and put an end for its existence. The most important of these constants are the religion, the economic greed and the Jewish act.

The only variable in the West's relations with Islam through the long history of this relationship is the diversity of the means and methods used by the West in dealing with Islam and Muslims, and they can be identified, with their plenty, in three types: the military occupation, the cultural invasion and the economic poverty. They were sometimes used in a parallel way and at one time, and they were also used for dealing other times depending on the requirements of circumstances.

Summary of Results

- The study showed several features of the negative image portrayed by the western media for the Arab Muslim woman. She is a woman on whom the hijab is imposed. She is also a weak woman that is subject to a religion that oppresses and suppresses her and she is a woman who is slaved by men. She does not have any legal rights and a woman who is prohibited from practicing her political rights. Therefore religion is considered as the main cause of the negative features of the image of the woman.

- The study posed several alternative perceptions for the image of the Arab Muslim woman as presented by the Western media. The perception that the woman is equal to men in everything came as the first alternative images presented by the Western media from the viewpoint of the study sample, followed by the woman liberated from the restrictions of customs and traditions. The woman who rebelled against her husband and society, then the image of the woman who took off the hijab or she is only satisfied with a simplistic form of it and finally the woman who is financially independent. This alternative image is not on the whole negative, except in the case there will be background goals because the equality of woman to men in rights and duties is an Islamic base, and the liberation from the extinct restrictions of customs and traditions, which stand against the development process, is also an advantage and not a defect. But the disobedience without justification is rejected. With regard to the perception of the removal of hijab, the West has no right to interfere in the privacies of any society especially those that are related to religion, and we also have no right to interfere in their religious privacies.

- The study proved the religious factors are superior to both the political and media ones for the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media. The elite believed that

the misunderstanding about Islam for polygamy, the lack of information about the Muslim woman and its inaccuracy at times, the misunderstanding about the Islamic teachings and traditions on divorce, the poor understanding about Islam on the inheritance of woman. The absence of a contemporary balanced model of woman that represents the character of the Muslim woman in her thought and culture in the international scene is one of the most important religious factors that stands behind the formation of the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media. The study proved that the Western sense of superiority, the Arab regimes that limit from the advancement of woman, the weakness of the political effectiveness of the Arab governments and the lack of an active role of the Arab embassies and consulates abroad. All of these are the most important political factors that stand behind the formation of the image of woman. As for the media factors which the elite considered them the most important factors for the formation of that image were: the local media blackout for the achievements of the Muslim woman in the Arab countries, the concentration of the Arab media on woman's traditional roles as a wife, a mother and a housewife and ignoring the woman as a producer, the mutual abuses among the Arab-Islamic countries in the media with regard to the woman's issues, the adoption of the Western media for certain types about Islam and Muslims, such as "extremism, terrorism and fundamentalism" and the concentration of Arab movies on presenting a negative image about the woman and her issues.

- The study posed the mechanisms on how to correct the image of the Arab Muslim woman in the Western media, including: redrafting the philosophy of the Arab media to face those suspicions directed by the Western media against the Muslim woman. The elite has crystallized the features of that media philosophy in the following: the Arab media discourse have to avoid the

exaggeration and extremism on the issues of the Arab Muslim woman, presenting the problems that concern the other such as (woman / religion / democracy / terrorism, ----- etc.) directly, accurately and unambiguously for the self-defense. The media philosophy that calls that the Arab media discourse has to explain the true women reality, then leaving the defending attacking double discourse with one for inside and another for outside. The elite also confirmed on the need to find a religious philosophy to respond to the West in their claims against the Arab Muslim woman, and the most important mechanisms of that philosophy: the preacher has to focus on the issue of persuasion so that he can face the concerns of his age, and the scientists have to be good at reading the reality. It is necessary to inform the West about Islam in a simple manner and appropriate style for the mentality and psychology of the West. There must be a revival in the Muslim mind and working as a team to face the West that consider us backward and focusing on the fiqh of priorities and not to occupy the nation with trivial matters.

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