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By

Sarah Nahas

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**The Mirage of Representation: A Critical Analysis of Arab Portrayal in Media**

**Supervising Committee:**

Kathrynn Pounders, Supervisor

Gary Wilcox

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**By**

**Sarah Nahas**

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## **Abstract**

### **The Mirage of Representation: A Critical Analysis of Arab Portrayal in Media**

By

Sarah Nahas, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin 2024

SUPERVISOR: Kathryn Ponders

**Purpose:** Media is pertinent in constructing audiences' attitudes and beliefs. The purpose of this study is to identify portrayals of Arabs in media, as well as analyze how audiences perceive said portrayals.

**Methodology:** This study included seven in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Arabs and non-Arabs. The data collected was analyzed using iterative thematic analysis.

**Findings:** Using iterative thematic analysis, which uncovered recurring themes and patterns throughout the interview process, proved helpful in uncovering themes such as stereotypes and media representation, aspirations of positive representation, and intersectionality.

**Practical Implications:** This research can inform further media practices to foster more accurate and authentic representation, potentially promoting cultural and identity understanding.

**Value:** This paper provides insights into the nuanced representation of Arab identities in media, thereby providing a deeper understanding of Arab perceptions.

**Keywords:** Arabs, Representation, Media, Stereotypes

**Paper type:** Research Paper

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## **Introduction**

Media plays a significant role when shaping viewers' attitudes, beliefs, and values. When media lacks diversity and representation, it perpetuates harmful stereotypes, reinforces biases, and affects how others view minority groups. This thesis explores the harmful stereotypes in which Arabs are portrayed in Western media and highlights the lack of visibility when seeing Arabs in advertisements and mainstream media. According to the United States Census, there are 3.7 million people who identify as Arab-American, with only 2.5% of Arab presence on screens across "1,500 broadcast, cable, and streaming TV Shows" (Nielsen, 2022). The minimal amount of Arab presence in media can contribute to an ethnocentric perception of them rather than a realistic and authentic depiction of the cultures, religions, and dialects that Arab people represent.

Arabs within the United States encompass individuals who trace their ancestry to the Arab world, which includes more than twenty countries in the Middle East and North Africa. These countries are part of the Arab World and share common linguistic, cultural, and historical ties. Arabs are found within various professions and fields throughout the country and contribute to the cultural, social, economic, and political life of the United States, while also having significantly contributed to American society through various fields, such as science, medicine, business, politics, arts, and more. Contrary to misconception, not all Arabs are Muslim, and not all Muslims are Arab, showcasing the dire need for Arab representation that does not just adhere to the stereotype that all Arabs are Muslims. There are many Arabs that live in the United States, with 63 percent of them being Christian, 24 percent being Muslim, and the remainder of them either practicing another religion or having no faith at all (Arab American Institute).

The overarching purpose of this thesis is to explore the portrayal of Arabs in Western media. First, an overview of Arab representation in American entertainment and advertising is discussed. Then, cultivation theory and expectancy theory are employed as theoretical frameworks to explore and analyze the representation and potential ramifications of Arab representation in the media.

Following this theoretical groundwork, a qualitative methodology, including seven interviews, was conducted to understand and gain insight into how audiences believe Arabs are portrayed in the media.

## Literature

The most crucial term to properly define first is race. Race is a social construct that categorizes and characterizes an individual. Race usually refers to physical characteristics such as skin color, hair texture, and others, while ethnicity is a categorization based on common heritage and culture. Since race is considered a social construct, we can conclude that historically, race was constructed to establish a social hierarchy that either gives or denies benefits and privileges (Roediger, 2021).

The Arab American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) defines and separates the difference between Arabs, the Arab world, and Arab Americans. 'Arab' is a cultural and linguistic term that typically refers to those who speak Arabic as their first language. The ADC defines Arab Americans as "Americans of Arab descent," with the most considerable number of Arab Americans residing in the Detroit-Dearborn area due to the second wave of immigration after World War II (ADC, 2022). It is important to note that "Arab American" encompasses a diverse group of people with different ethnicities, languages, and religious beliefs. The contributions and efforts that Arabs have made throughout the American economy and community have proven that they are an integral part of the multicultural fabric of the United States.

Arab immigrants come in diverse shades, and it is difficult for these Immigrants to assimilate into their unfamiliar environment quickly. This can be especially true when immigrating to countries where they are the ethnic minority and stand out visibly to the dominant population. Until 1909, Arabs were easily granted citizenship in the United States since they were perceived as white at the time. However, after 1911, "the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization denied citizenship to Arab Americans," so in the late 1940s, Arabs, to gain access to citizenship, were



more comfortable being classified as "white" in America (Starck, 2009, p. 186). Immigration to the United States, especially in the early 20th century, led to immigrants wanting to assimilate to the "white" identity in the States due to the racial hierarchy that is still upheld today. To properly understand the concept of racial hierarchy and how it affected immigrants, the definition of 'whiteness' is critical. Whiteness represents a sociological category that demarcates unspoken privilege and power" (Ajouruch & Jamal, 2007, p. 860). The immigration policy in the United States has "historically employed whiteness as a precondition for citizenship" (Ajrouch and Jamal 2007, as cited by Gaultieri, 2001; Hale, 2002, p. 860). Partly due to civil rights issues at the time, which led to racial unease throughout America, Arabs conforming to a "white" identity made them feel safer during this period.

### **A Review of Arabs in American Entertainment**

This representation of Arabs in Western entertainment media includes American entertainment, such as movies and television shows. Jack Shaheen defines Arabs depicted in films as "brute murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil-rich dimwits, and abusers of women" (Shaheen, 2003, p. 172). Within these films, Dr. Jake Shaheen analyzed about 1,000 films between 1896 and 2000, and he found that "only 12 representations were positive, 53 were neutral, and an astounding 935 were negative" (Shaheen, 2022, p. 174).

Famous quotes depicted in Hollywood films include, "They [the Arabs] all look alike to me," was said by the American hero in *The Shiek Steps Out* (1937), "I cannot tell one [Arab] from another. Wrapped in those bed sheets they all look the same to me" says the U.S. Ambassador in *Hostage* (1986)"(Shaheen, 2003, p. 172). However, in recent years, there has been a sudden shift in media with a more positive depiction of Arabs, including: "Ramy" (2019) on Hulu, which

follows an Egyptian-American man from New Jersey on his spiritual journey; "Mo" (2022) on Netflix which shows a comedic approach by portraying how Palestinian Refugee Mo Najar, the star of the show, straddles the line between living between two vastly different cultures and everywhere in between, and lastly Marvel's first Egyptian superhero Scarlet Scarab who uses supernatural forces that draw from an ancient Egyptian tradition in the show "Moon Knight"(2022) on Disney +.

A notable example of media inaccurately portraying Arab culture and identity is displayed in the popular Disney movie Aladdin (1992). Within the movie's original opening song, "Arabian Nights." The original song stated, "Oh, I come from a land From a faraway place, Where the caravan camels roam, Where they cut off your ear If they don't like your face, It's barbaric, but hey, it's home," within these lyrics, Disney immediately insinuates that the Arab world is a place with deserts and camels, that contain arbitrary cruelty and barbarism as well. Within American media, there are distorted lenses in which "Arabs look different and threatening" (Shaheen, 2003, p. 172). Hollywood needs to effectively and accurately depict Arab people and the Arab world to keep Arab characteristics in Hollywood characters true to culture and history (Wingfield & Karaman, 1995).

### **A Review of Arabs in Advertising**

There are always positive and negative connotations and stereotypes portrayed in media and advertisements (Robner & Eisend, 2023). Several advertisements were withdrawn because Arab organizations, such as the Arab American Institute (AAI), objected to the offensive messages portrayed in these advertisements. The Arab American Institute pulled a billboard advertisement intended to be put out in North Carolina and New Mexico. This advertisement aimed to make

driver's licenses more secure within these states. The images on the billboard depicted a man in a traditional Arab head scarf holding what looked to be a grenade. They showcased the message: "Do not license Terrorists in North Carolina" (Starck, 2009, p. 182).

Another instance of this occurring was the billboard promotion of ethanol, displaying a farmer in a cornfield and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia with a quote in between them stating, "Who would you rather buy your gas from?". These are primarily made to showcase that minorities do not typically look or act like what our society has deemed to be the "American ideal." The Ad Council, which makes public service announcements on behalf of both the government and non-profit organizations, released a public statement video shortly after the effects of 9/11 called "I am an American." This ad was able to display actors with a range of diversity, with their goal being to discourage further attacks on Arabs, Muslims, and Sikhs by promoting through the marker 'American.' Although this was the purpose of this ad, there were no visible markers to indicate that they were targeting Arabs as a part of their target demographic because there were no signs of distinctive Arab or Muslim identities shown throughout the ad. (Alsultany, 2007). These real-world indicators can "lead to a lack of respect and even disdain when it comes to the ability of an individual or group" (Drew & Sus, 2018).

A minority group is a "sociological category that differs from the dominant social majority based on personal characteristics, such as gender, race or ethnicity, religion, and age" (Robner & Eisend, 2023, p.775). In the post 9/11 era, lots of ethnic minorities were perpetuated by others as looking 'Arab,' going hand in hand with social role theory. Social role theory "explains the potential differences and changes in ethnic minority representations in advertising over time, between cultures, and in different media" (Robner & Eisend, 2023, p. 776). Since ethnic minorities tend to settle for unskilled or blue-collar jobs when they immigrate to Western

countries, within advertising, they tend to highlight only white-collar jobs that are predominately made up of white men (Robner & Eisend, 2023). In 2013, Coca-Cola came out with a Super Bowl commercial that featured Arabs riding camels in the desert, which is a representation that is outdated and problematic, which led to Arabs making formal complaints to Coca-Cola. This advertisement was especially problematic since other forms of transportation in the commercial included Vegas showgirls and cowboys using more convenient forms than reaching a bottle of coke in the desert (Nittle, 2021).

However, there have been media outlets that have portrayed Arabs accurately. For instance, the popular Nike ad showcases new modest workout clothes and hijabs for Muslim women.

Although the commercial was made for Middle Eastern consumers, the video went viral due to the issues touched on throughout the Middle East, which women in the Middle East face daily when trying to engage in an active and healthy lifestyle (Lang, 2017)—advertisements such as this showcase positive portrayals of Arabs in media. However, there are still Arab depictions in media that showcase ethnic stereotyping, which "corrupts the imagination, narrows our vision, and blurs reality" (Starck, 2009, p. 192).

### **A Review of Islamophobia**

Islamophobia is "any distinction, exclusion, or restriction towards, or preference against, Muslims, or those perceived to be Muslims, that has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life" (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022; Cited By: Elahi and Khan, 2017). From this definition, we can concur that Islamophobia goes hand in hand with cultivation theory and stereotypes because the media

has certain biases when putting out content that reinforces harmful stereotypes. Islamophobia has been shown primarily due to mass media because they have "the power to influence minds worsened the situation by portraying undesirable, stereotypical, one-sided images of Muslims and Islam," therefore "causing fear, anxiety, and unrest among the common people, subsequently developing prejudice, racism, and conflict in society, leading to an unhealthy environment and disturbed peace" in many countries such as the United States (Sufi & Yasmin, 2022).

Islamophobia is not a new phenomenon, and although there are Muslims all over the world, not just within the Arab world, all Muslims are subject to harassment and beratement within the United States. In 2004, Cornell University conducted a nationwide survey in which they found that an alarming amount of biases and opinions towards Muslims are negative. The study found that "74 percent characterized Islamic countries as oppressive to women; 50 percent perceived Muslims as violent, dangerous, and passionate; and one-third indicated that a majority of Muslims are hostile to the United States" (Alsultany, 2007). The constant negative branding of Muslims in media can lead to inaccurate biases and hate crimes.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

Stereotypes are individuals' beliefs about a particular social group or type of person (Johnson & Grier, 2012). These stereotypes can also fit into the stereotype content model (SCM), which explains how people form opinions and make judgments about individuals or groups based on the two dimensions the model perceives: warmth (trustworthiness, friendliness) and competence (capability, assertiveness) (Drew & Sus, 2023). This model is "the foundation for various social evaluations, including prejudice and discrimination" (Drew and Sus, 2018, Cited by Fiske, 2018). The Stereotype Content Model can include stereotypes such as men being perceived as more competent and less warm, while with women, it is the opposite in which they are perceived as warm but not confident; this is due to the societal stereotypes ingrained into us for generations. Two theories that are instrumental in understanding the impact of stereotypes on society are expectancy theory and cultivation theory.

### ***Expectancy Theory***

Expectancy theory "suggests that to the extent that advertising portrayals build or reinforce expectancies, they may contribute to undue pressure being placed on minority groups" (Taylor & Yung Lee, 1994, p.239). Popular depictions of this theory in media can include harmful stereotypes, such as how men do not show emotions or how East Asians excel in mathematics and science. Regarding Arabs, they are commonly depicted as violent or as terrorists; this theory would suggest that Arabs may believe they are expected to conform in this manner, which could be particularly harmful for younger Arabs. Expectancy Theory depicts how society has "grown up with these images, and [how] we have become so accustomed to them...we do not even recognize how they distort our perceptions" (Shaheen & Yousman, 2007, p. 15). When there are

depictions of people of color using nonverbal features such as facial expressions and body language, it can also negatively impact racial and ethnic biases for white viewers.

Due to the "lack of contact between racial groups, people tend to rely on media stereotypes to formulate ideas about people outside of their own race" (Wang-Yuen, 2019). When individuals from underrepresented communities consistently encounter negative portrayals of their culture, ethnicity, and identity, it can further internalize a sense of inferiority—further perpetuating a cycle of biased expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies among minorities or groups of individuals who are stereotyped in several ways.

### ***Cultivation Theory***

Cultivation theory suggests "the relationship between the audience's exposure to TV and their perception of reality" and how these constructed perceptions of the world directly affect individuals' behaviors (Melham & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019, p. 260). Cultivation within the context of showcasing Arabs in media automatically puts them into a violent and villainous role. The research done by Samer Melhem and Narissa Punyanunt-Carter used cultivation theory to examine Arab representation in media and identified three misrepresentational themes of Arabs in media: "the distortions of language, the characterization of women, and the representations of terrorism" (Melhem & Punyanunt-Carte, 2019, p. 260). The first theme is the mischaracterization of Arab terminology and language, defined as the misappropriated words within this vocabulary that have become "coded expressions of postmodern racism in American vernacular" (Melhem & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019, p. 260). A famous depiction of this occurring in media is when the phrase "salaam alaikum" is stated on television, which is deemed to be associated with violence and terrorism when, in fact, it directly translates to "peace be upon you." Hollywood is able "to

take a common word that represents a benign concept and use it to describe an exceptional case—which Arabs experience as a deviation from the norm, hijacks the language and mischaracterizes the commonality of the phenomena" (Melhem & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019, p. 262).

The second theme that emerged was wrongful depictions within the media regarding the construal of Arab women's identity. Arab women are "portrayed as weak and oppressed figures in society, controlled by domineering men" or even sexualized as belly dancers or harem girls (Melhem & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019, p. 262). Arab women are often portrayed with stereotypes that depict them as sexualized and oppressed, a trend common in media, exemplified by the popular Disney movie *Aladdin*. Throughout the movie, Jasmine, the princess, and main character, is not only typecast as someone longing for freedom due to confinement from her overbearing father, but her outfits misrepresent the appropriate garments worn in Arab countries. Another factor to consider is that Jasmine's only goal throughout this movie is to find a worthy husband. These characteristics are far from what Arab women resemble in real life, and stereotyping Jasmine into the role of someone who has these experiences is a misrepresentation of the Arab community. Scholars who have examined the portrayal of Arab women in "mainstream Western media conclude that they are often depicted as passive, oppressed, and submissive in a male-dominated region" (Eissa et al., 2022, p. 3). This is where expectancy theory, where one plays into their stereotypical roles to appease society, may negatively affect young Arab women because it could lead them to believe they need to conform to how Arab women are depicted in the media.

The last misrepresentation that was identified is the typecasting of Arab roles as terrorists. Extreme racism against Arabs existed long before the attack of 9/11; however, "the events of that



day provided legitimacy to anti-Arab racists and caused an uproar of crimes and illegal discrimination against Arab Americans" (Tamer, 2010, p. 102). The impact of 9/11 had on the audience's beliefs about Arabs; media outlets have been forced to conform to these beliefs instead of changing them (Melhem & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019).

## Methodology

Despite substantial research on the audience attitudes and representation of racial and ethnic minority groups throughout the United States, less is known about how individuals view the representation of Arabs in media. Although there is a need for more research on this topic, the existing work utilizes quantitative measures that tend to miss the audience's complexity of views about race and ethnicity. This study uses a qualitative research approach to explore “complex phenomenon(s), capturing people’s experiences, understanding, and perspectives in specific contexts or situations” (Bayeck, 2021, p. 1). This study investigates the portrayal of Arabs in media through an iterative thematic lens, which will be employed to analyze data collected through semi-structured one-on-one interviews.

These semi-structured interviews allow an in-depth exploration of participants' attitudes, beliefs, and subjective experiences related to Arab portrayal in media. Participants with diverse backgrounds, including individuals who identify as Arab and others with insights or experiences relevant to the research topic, were recruited. This approach aims to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives while enriching the study's findings. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for accuracy during data analysis. These interviews were approximately thirty minutes and included in-depth questions such as: “How do you perceive the current portrayal of minorities in mainstream media?” and “In your opinion, what are some common stereotypes associated with Arab characters in film and television” (see Appendix A for the interview guide).

This study implemented coding measures to identify patterns and concepts within the transcripts to ensure a comprehensive iterative thematic analysis. Subsequently, codes were organized into overarching themes and subthemes through constant comparison (Morgan & Nica, 2020). The

results from this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of Arab portrayal in media and connotations of identity, culture, and social perceptions.

## Findings

<b>Names of Participants (Pseudonym)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
Alex	Male	24	Arab
Scott	Male	24	Hispanic
Allison	Female	22	White
Grace	Female	27	Black/ African American
Samantha	Female	30	South Asian
Isabel	Female	20	Arab
Natasha	Female	21	Arab

**Figure 1.** Overview of Interviewees

Results reveal three emergent themes and patterns during the interview process: stereotypes and media representation, aspirations of positive representation, and intersectionality.

### *Negative Stereotypes and Media Representation*

The first theme that emerged, negative stereotypes and representation, refers to the types of negative stereotypes of Arabs and the narrow media representation of Arabs. This study defines stereotypes and media representation as oversimplified or exaggerated portrayals of fictional characters, individuals, or groups based on previous biases and notions. The analysis of these responses regarding pertinent negative stereotypes was overwhelming. There was a unanimous response on how Arabs are often typecast as barbaric terrorists who have no concern for others' well-being. Alex stated that as an Arab, “terrorism in the media subjects people like me to distorted ideas of what being an Arab is,” suggesting a pervasive sentiment of the cultural misrepresentation of Arabs. Scott also provided a valuable insight when he stated, “harmful stereotypes such as terrorism in media are either heavily perpetuated by Arabs, or they are not given representation at all, giving no middle ground for nuanced characters.” This aligns with cultivation theory because it fosters a monolithic view of Arabs portrayed in media; therefore, viewers “rely on media stereotypes to formulate ideas about people outside of their race” (Wang-Yuen, 2019).

Additionally, respondents discussed how minorities tend to be subject to tokenism tropes within entertainment media. During an interview with Grace, she mentioned pertinent details regarding tokenism, which she states usually occurs when media outlets tokenize minorities to meet their quota, for monetization, or both. To support this statement, Grace also underscored the detrimental impact tokenism had when she was growing up because “black women are often

shown as aggressive and rude, like in the movie ‘10 Things I Hate About You’, in which Gabrielle Union portrayed a mean girl as a side character who had no character development.” These tokenistic representations reinforce harmful stereotypes that marginalize and erase not only Arab voices but their experiences and identities as well. Interviewees stated that they tend to see Arabs subjected to roles such as the terrorist/villain, oil magnate, sheiks, or simply being the token diversity character. For instance, during an interview with Samantha, she shed some light on a movie from 2018 called *Beirut*. She described the Arabs within the film as “barbaric terrorists, while the white characters were deemed Heroes,” revealing the stark contrast between white characters and characters of color. While analyzing answers, we also discovered that the perception of these narratives intersected with broader societal racial issues, contributing to the continuation of media perpetuating negative stereotypes. Isabel stated that she believes "there has been some recent, accurate portrayal of Arabs, such as shows like *Ramy* and *Mo*, and while this progress is great, the portrayal of Arab women within the shows, however, is seen as the stereotypical Arab woman." This goes to show that there is an overwhelming lack of Arabs portrayed in the media. Although there have been small steps of progress, there are more cultures, identities, and experiences within the Arab community that need to be authentically reflected within media narratives.

### *Aspirations of Positive Representation*

Aspirations of change within the context of minorities encompass the collective desire to promote and create more accurate and inclusive representations of marginalized communities. Throughout the interview process, a discernable pattern emerged whenever negative portrayals of Arabs were brought up in conversation; participants expressed aspirations for change and

further inclusivity in media representation to call for authentic narratives that reflect the complexity of Arab identities and culture. Participants stated that audiences and media professionals can challenge and change these stereotypes by conducting research, giving Arabs a platform to speak about their culture and identity, and being more open-minded towards Arabs in media instead of subjecting them through a monolithic lens. Isabel and Allison emphasized the potential for positive change through in-depth research, empowering marginalized voices, and promoting authentic stories. Further, Allison provides an essential insight when she states, “Media organizations need to empower voices that have long been marginalized and ensure that every story told is authentic, nuanced, and uplifting.”

### *Intersectionality*

Intersectionality “is an indispensable framework for understanding how dimensions of unequal, racial, gendered, and classed economic, cultural, and power relations are institutionalized and reproduced” and is critical in understanding and exploring racial prejudice within the context of Arab representation in media (Rattansi, 2020, p. 134). Participants discussed various intersectional topics, including gender, culture, and religion. While discussing intersectionality, Isabel stated that “seeing inaccurate portrayals of Arab women in media, particularly when they are depicted as oppressed, makes me feel like we still have a long way to go regarding seeing myself accurately portrayed in media.” Although most participants could not cite specific instances due to the overwhelming lack of portrayal, their points attributed to the connection between racial prejudice and these sub-themes. For instance, one interviewee, Allison, articulated that “Arab women tend to be more over-sexualized, exoticized, and oppressed more than their male counterparts.” This perspective echoes in current media, such as “in James Bond’s

The Spy Who Loved Me, the Arab women included were objectified to the point that their characters were credited as "Arab beauty 1, 2, 3" [as well as] Netflix's Elite or Apple TV's Hala perpetuating the trope that Muslim women need to break away from their traditions to enjoy any autonomy or agency" (Twajj, 2022). These "generalizations negate the trailblazing work of {Arab} women role models" (Twajj, 2022).



## Discussion

This research aimed to advance the discourse surrounding the perpetuation of Arabs in the media by applying expectancy and cultivation theories. Expectancy theory facilitated an examination of the audience's impact on relying on media stereotypes to formulate ideas, as shown in our results, in which interview participants revealed how media affects their biases and attitudes towards Arabs. Prior research rooted in cultivation theory, the audience's exposure to TV, and their perception of reality revealed three themes of misrepresentation of Arabs, which included the mischaracterization of Arab terminology, the negative portrayal of Arab women, and the typecasting of stereotypical roles such as terrorists (Melham & Punyanunt-Carter, 2019). These theories were integral in shaping the interview guide, allowing the researcher to understand the individual effects of these stereotypes on people's biases and attitudes. Findings from this study revealed three major themes: negative stereotypes and media representation, aspirations for positive representations, and intersectionality.

Firstly, negative stereotypes continue to dominate portrayals of Arabs in various forms of media, which depict narrow and negative connotations of Arab culture and identity. Audiences desire narratives that go beyond stereotypes and delve into the diverse experiences and perspectives within the Arab community. Lastly, it is crucial to recognize that Arab identities are intersected through factors such as gender, religion, and culture. It must acknowledge these intersecting factors to ensure accurate representation. Precise representation of Arab people in American media reflects reality and actuality, shapes perceptions, and fosters a society that values diversity and inclusion through positive media reinforcement.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

Additional research on the representation of Arabs in media could explore various divisions to deepen understanding and address existing gaps. Primarily, by having an extended participant pool, we could assess more people's perceptions of Arabs in media, generating a diverse range of responses that align with the research. Moreover, exploring and analyzing the roles of media producers, journalists, directors, and more can help gain insight into the influence of industry dynamics and market forces on current and past representation patterns. Lastly, examining the global context of Arab intersectionality can help contribute to a broader understanding of the complexities surrounding media portrayals.

## Appendix A

### *Interview Guide*

- How do you perceive the current portrayal of minorities in mainstream media?  
Examples?
- How do you perceive the current portrayal of Arabs in mainstream media?
- In your opinion, what are some common stereotypes associated with Arab characters in film and television?
- Can you provide examples of positive and negative representations of Arabs in the media? How do these portrayals impact societal perceptions?
- Do you think media plays a significant role in shaping public perception of Arab culture and identity?
- How do you think the lack of diverse representation of Arabs in media affects the Arab community?
- Are there any films, TV shows, Ads, or media outlets that you believe accurately represent Arab culture and people? Why do you think they are successful in their portrayal?
- How can content creators and media professionals work towards more accurate and diverse representation of Arabs in media?
- What responsibilities do filmmakers, media, and news organizations have when depicting Arab characters and stories?

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