



Islam-o-phobia: Racialization and Stereotyping of Arabs and Muslim Americans

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The Middle East Changed





What you Don't Know Can Hurt

- ✦ Myths, misunderstanding, and bias concerning Arab and Muslim culture are prevalent even in scientific and academic publications.
- ✦ Arab American Studies has been marginalized and knowledge of this population/macro-ethnic group is not widespread or readily accessible.
- ✦ After 9/11 when Arab and Muslim populations became a “hot” topic there was a proliferation of over-night experts – the language and culture is complex and requires extensive understanding.



Discrimination and Phobia

- ✦ There is a secret and little-known history of the Arab and Muslim American experience .
- ✦ But first, we need background information...

The Arab World

- ✦ The Arab world refers to the 22 Arab countries extending from the African shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab/Persian Gulf in Asia



Countries of the Arab World

✦ 10 in Africa

- ✦ Mauritania
- ✦ Morocco
- ✦ Algeria
- ✦ Tunisia
- ✦ Libya
- ✦ Egypt
- ✦ Sudan
- ✦ Somalia
- ✦ Djibouti
- ✦ Comoros Islands

✦ 12 in Asia

- ✦ Syria
- ✦ Lebanon
- ✦ Iraq
- ✦ Jordan-
- ✦ Palestine
- ✦ Saudi Arabia
- ✦ Bahrain
- ✦ Kuwait
- ✦ Oman
- ✦ Qatar
- ✦ The United Arab Emirates
- ✦ Yemen

The Arab World versus the Middle East

- The Middle East is a geopolitical term created by the English Empire
- Includes some Arab countries and non-Arab countries Iran, Turkey and Israel and omits a large segment of North Africa.





Diversity Issues

- ✦ Arabs are a macro-ethnic population with a common language, history, and cultural similarities. Arabs are a multi-racial group with a variety of physical traits and a range of skin color from light to dark.
- ✦ Not all Arabs are Muslim –the Arab world contains significant religious diversity –Christians, Jews, Druze, Ba’hai and others
- ✦ The Arab World contains non-Arab minorities: Berbers, Jews, Kurds, Chaldeans, Assyrians, many Somali and Sudanese non-Arab tribes, etc.
- ✦ Even within religious groups there are divisions (Sunni and Shi’a) and different sets: Orthodox Christians, Eastern Rite Christians like the Maronite and Chaldeans, and even Protestants.



Understanding Diversity Issues

- ✦ There are very large gaps in socio-economic backgrounds in the Arab World.
- ✦ Education levels vary from county to country, internally in urban and rural populations, and between genders.
- ✦ The application of secularism versus Islamic law and traditions varies from country to country and sometimes even internally in different countries.
- ✦ Development in the region is uneven.



Who are Arab Americans?

- Arabs in America due to acculturation and assimilation, both biologically and culturally, are somewhat distinct from Arabs in the Middle East or elsewhere. They are the new immigrants and descendents of Arabic speaking people from any of the Arab countries.
- Arab Americans come predominately from 5 countries/areas: Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinians, Yemen, and North Africa.
- While the majority of Arab Americans are Christians, a growing percentage of Arab Americans are Muslim and this includes the first Muslim populations in the United States.

Islam

Belief	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
One God	Adonai , Elohim	God/Allah/Trinity	Allah
Abraham	yes	yes	yes
Isaac	Preferred son	Preferred son	Lesser Son
Ishmael	Lesser son	Lesser son	Preferred son
Major OT Prophets	yes	yes	yes
Jesus	no	yes	yes
Mary	no	yes	yes
Afterlife	?? questioned	yes	yes



Islam 5 Pillars

- ✳ *Shehadeh* Profession of faith- there is only one God and the Prophet Muhammad is his messenger
- ✳ *Zakat*- charitable giving
- ✳ *Salat* – 5 times a day for formal prayer
- ✳ *Haj*- make pilgrimage one in a lifetime
- ✳ *Sawm*- Ramadan- fasting one month sun up to sundown



Racial Classification of Arabs in the US: Census

Why we cannot count Arab Americans:

- ✦ There are some 3-4 million Arab Americans and as many as 6 million Muslims (over half being non-Arabs).
- ✦ Arab Americans were classified as “Turks in Asia” and “Asiatic” and “Syrians” then re-classified as a white population in 1952.
- ✦ There is no box on the census for Arabs.
- ✦ The only data we have is from the long form of the census (starting in 2000) that goes to 1 in 17 families. There is a huge miscount of Arab Americans for these and other reasons.
- ✦ Not all Arab Americans are comfortable filling out a census report and we have groups that are ethno-religious minorities from the Arab world who may not identify as Arab. There is much more to this story.



Arabs in America

There are believed to be 3-4 million Arab Americans. They are concentrated in major urban areas such as:

Detroit, MI

Los Angeles, CA

Chicago, IL

Cleveland, OH

Washington, D.C.

Houston, TX

Passaic, NJ

New York, NY

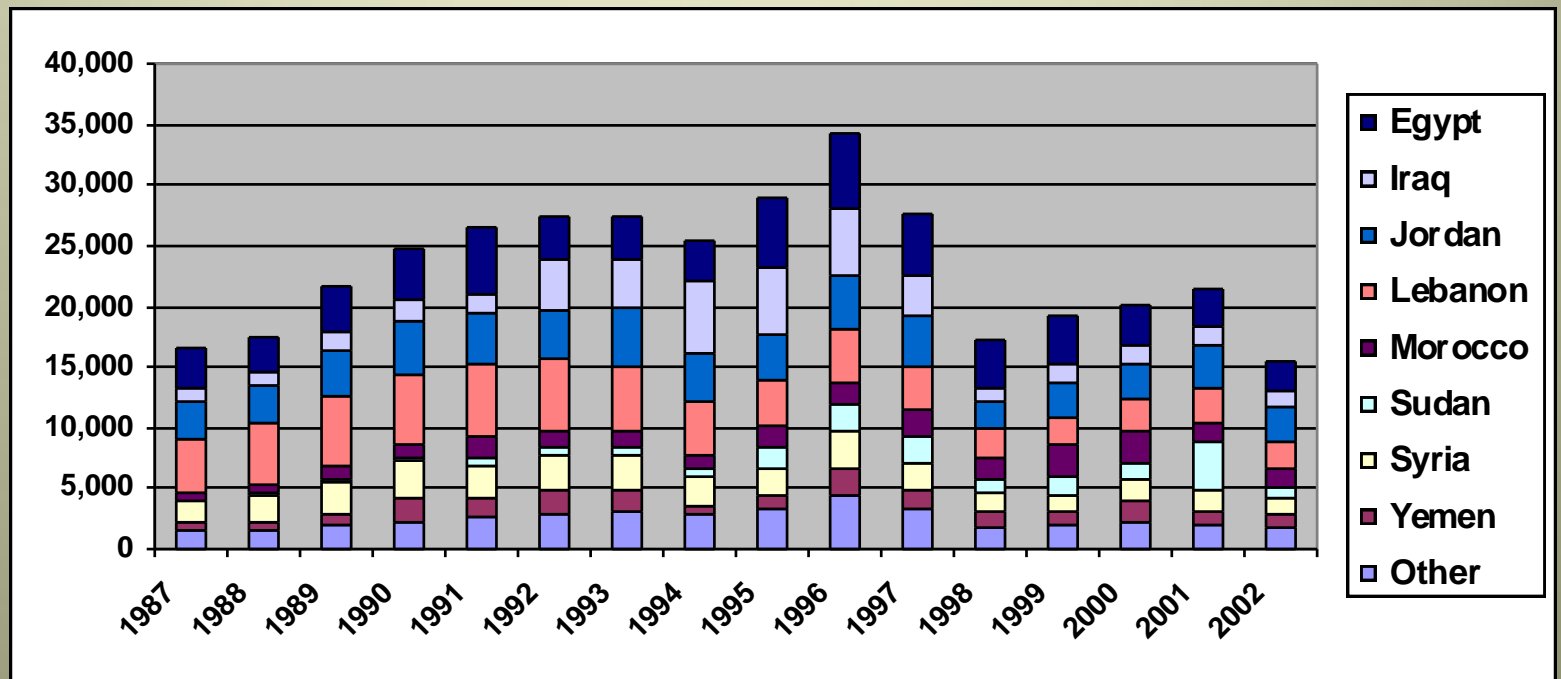
Toledo, OH

Boston, MA

Dallas, TX

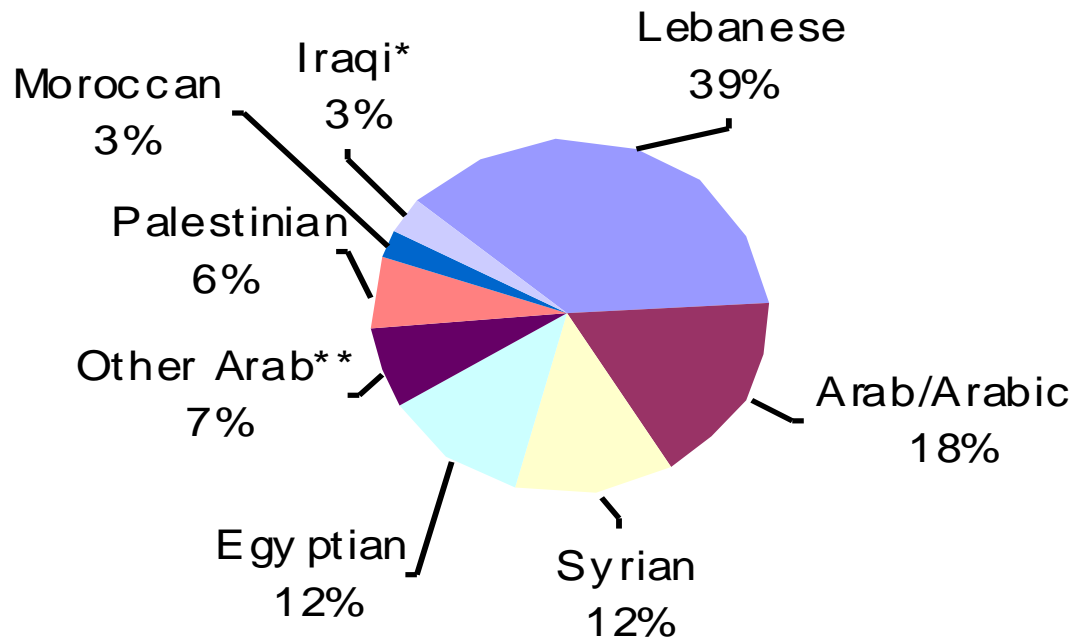
There are some 6 million Muslims in the US and Arabs are only a portion of the Muslim population.

Arab Immigrants Admitted to U.S. (1987-2002)



Ancestry of Arab Americans by Primary Identification

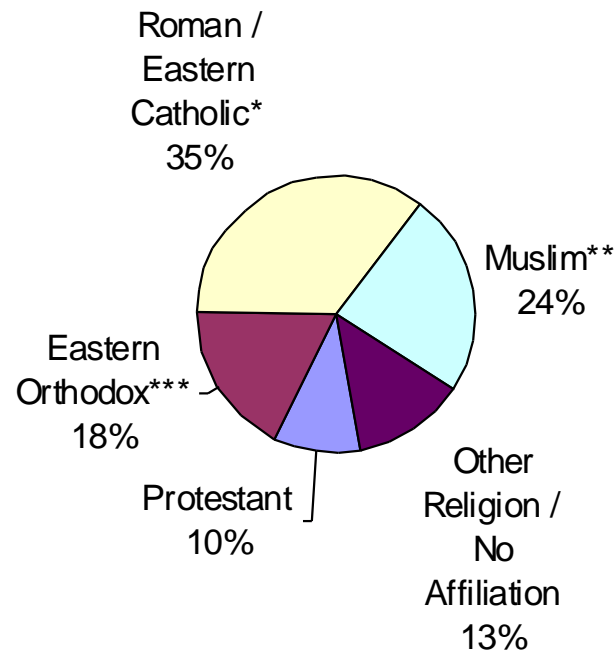
Based on U.S. Census 2000 data



**Includes those from Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Does not include persons from Sudan, Somalia, or Mauritania

Religious Affiliations of Arab Americans

Based on Zogby International Survey (2002)



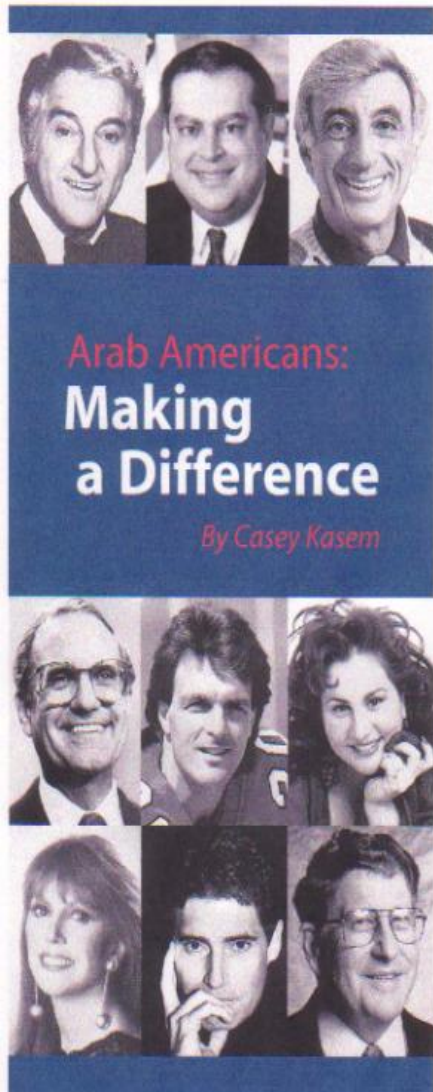
*Eastern Catholic includes Roman Catholic, Maronite, and Melkite (Greek Catholic) rites.

**Muslim includes Sunni, Shi'a, and Druze.

***Eastern Orthodox includes Antiochian, Syrian, Greek and Coptic rites.

(Note: The population of Arab American Muslims is growing and many researchers feel they are undercounted- R.H.)

A Few Famous Arab Americans: Lebanese Americans



Danny Thomas comedian, actor, founder of St. Jude's Hospital

Spencer Abraham U.S Secretary of Energy

Jamie Farr - actor, Klinger on hit series, MASH

George Mitchell- Former Senate Majority Leader

Doug Flutie 1984 Hesiman Trophy Winner

Kathy Najimy actor - Olive on Veronica's Closet, Sister Act etc.

Marlo Thomas- actor- star of series "That Girl" etc.

Michael Nouri-actor: Flash Dance and Love & War

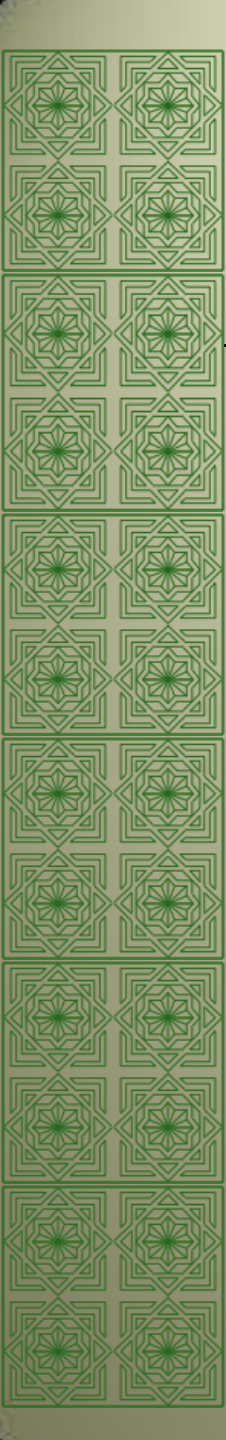
John Sununu Former White House Chief of Staff

For hundreds of others see:

<http://www.aaiusa.org/arabamericans/>

A Changing Arab American Narrative :

The Old Narrative



WAVE	COMPOSITION	DATES
1 st Wave	Predominately Lebanese Christians	1880-1948
2 nd Wave	More Muslim , more diverse	1948-present

The narrative, written largely by elite Lebanese, was a narrative of assimilation: a fairy tale story of essentially: “the Lebanese came to America, did very well, and lived happily ever after”.

It was a largely an unexamined narrative except by some few writers and scholars until the 1990s.

General Arab American Immigration

WAVES	COMPOSITION	DATES
Pre-wave	Early Arab explorers and those brought as slaves.	1770s- 1860ss
1st Major Wave	Predominately Lebanese Christians, first Yemeni, some Palestinians, etc	1880- 1924
1st Exclusion Period	Turks in Asia- “Asiatic” non-Europeans excluded	1924-1952
2nd Major Wave	Predominately Levantine Muslims, brain drain, refugees	1952-1965
3 rd Major Wave	Predominately Muslim, Large Numbers of Refugees	1965-
2nd Exclusion Period –Informal or Discretionary	All Muslims? Mostly Arabs?	2001- ??



Restricted Immigration

- For the majority of their history in the US, Arab Americans have faced restriction on their immigration.
- Arab Americans, with the rest of those not designated northern European, were excluded from the US from 1924-1952.
- The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952 (the McCarran–Walter Act) recognized a racial group called “Syrians” but gave them the lowest quota of any group, restricting them to 100 a year.
- It wasn’t until the 1960s, that restrictions on Arab immigration eased.
- In the 1990s, the Clinton Administration began new restrictions on the immigration of Arab Americans and as of 9/11/2001 obtaining visas and citizenship became increasingly difficult (“an informal exclusion”).



Early Muslims and Slavery

An example: Zamoura, also known by his Christian slave name as Estevanicos, accompanied the Spanish Conquistador, Cabeza de Baca and arrived in Florida in 1528.

Although it is difficult to arrive at exact numbers, some 15- 30% of the estimated 20 million Africans brought to the Americas were Muslim. In an ironic twist, the first country to recognize the newly independent United States in 1776 was the Arab, Muslim, North African country of Morocco, and in exchange Morocco was promised that none of its citizens would be taken as slaves. But the Spanish had no such compunction.



Early Lebanese: Litigating Whiteness: Fighting for Citizenship

- The right to citizenship was deeply tied to the concept of race and religion- and the government cases repeatedly challenged and tried to re-draw the lines of whiteness to exclude Arabs up until the 1940s. For the Syrian/Lebanese, if you were not white, you could not be a US citizen.
- Early Arab Americans (mostly Syrian/Lebanese Christians) were disproportionately represented in immigration cases (just under a third of all the cases from 1909-1923) challenging their right to be citizens on the grounds that they were “Asiatic” and therefore “non-free non-white”.



A Globally Contested Identity

- Globally, Arab identity and rights were being attacked in immigration cases in Brazil, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and France. Arab Americans sent help and legal aid to compatriots in New Zealand.
- This was also the period of the beginning of European colonialism in the Middle east. The British labeled Arabs with the “w-word” (“wog”= “n-word”) and the French tried to convince Lebanese they were non-Arab Phoenicians.



Complicated Push and Pull Factors

- The majority of the early Arabs, the Syrian Lebanese, were poor village agriculturalists. The Mt. Lebanon area in the 1860s was under Ottoman rule, had a feudal land ownership system, experienced clashes and massacres between Christian Maronites and Druze in a crumbling and abusive Ottoman economic system undergoing the pangs of industrialization, where women's roles were also changing. America represented a way out. The old narrative leaves out trans-nationalism. Most of the Syrians were anti-Ottoman.
- The US was not seen as colonial. Ameen Rihani went to the US President and asked the US to enter WWI to free the Arabs from the Ottomans; he preferred the US to the European colonial powers. The Arabs wanted freedom and what they received in exchange was a double-cross.



Racial Confusion

- In the first immigration case in 1909, Costa George Najour, was confronted with the term, “Asiatic”- his response was that he was not Chinese- he was “different from the Yellow race”. This occurred in the era of intense anti-Chinese sentiment.
- While fighting for their whiteness and therefore their right to stay in the US and become American citizens, many Syrian/Lebanese wrote home to ask, “ To what race do I belong?” (Gualtieri 2009: 8).



To Assimilate or Not?

- After winning the right to stay, primarily due to religious affiliations, there was intense pressure to assimilate. Some early Arab Americans did change their names . Many attempted to claim white privilege.
- But the Arab American experience was one of “inbetweenness” and as Helen Sanhan described it, of being “not quite white”.
- Arab Americans were not embraced as white by the general America population. The story of their struggles has largely been unknown and couched in silence.



Racial Discrimination

- The Syrians were “swarthy”, “dark”, “Oriental”, exotic and dangerous “Others”.
- Senator F.M. Simmons said the Syrian immigrants were the “degenerate progeny of the Asiatic hordes [sic] The spawn of the Phoenician curse”.
- “The Syrians are nearly all peddlers if they are anything. There are very few of them in the South End outside of Oliver Place. Next to the Chinese, who can never be in any real sense American, they are the most foreign of all our foreigners. Whether on the streets in their oriental costumes, or in their rooms gathered about a Turkish pipe, they are apart from us....” Associated Charities of Boston, 1892 Robert Woods editor *The City of Wilderness* pp.36-37.



Early Backlash

- Arab Americans were attacked verbally by nativists during this era.
- In 1923, members of the notoriously racist Klu Klux Klan dynamited the house of a Syrian family in Marietta, Georgia.
- Door-to-door “peddlers crossed the racial lines to sell to both African Americans and whites. The “peddlers” experienced discrimination from white populations.
- In 1929, a Syrian grocer, Nola Romey, was lynched in Lake City, Florida and his wife killed by law enforcement officers who had KKK affiliation.

Why Arabs and Muslims Did Not Go South: A Lynching in Florida

✧ Sallom Mokkarzel, one of the Mahjar writers, wrote in 1929 was “one of the saddest tragedies in the history of the Syrians in America”, the lynching of Nola Romey and the murder of his wife, both Lebanese Christians, in Lake City, Florida in 1928.

✧ The irony is that they had moved to Florida to escape harassment by the Klu Klux Klan in Georgia that had threatened them and their children.



Racial Classification

- ✦ Two Southern judges presiding over separate immigrations cases tried to have the fair-skinned Lebanese defendants declared non-free non- whites. One such case was the Dow case in the early 1900s. These cases were won by the defendants but they used the prejudice of the judges against them in asking whether Jesus was black or white and knowing no prejudiced judge would answer black and that they're were also from the Holy Land.
- ✦ But that did not stop the treatment of Arabs as Helen Samhan describes it in her article , as not quite white. In 1952, when the immigration restrictions were lifted a bit, the Middle East received the lowest quota of any region in the world, even though they had been reclassified as white, a situation today that baffles North Africans



Early Muslims and Islamophobia

The Sultan of Turkey sent the first Arabian horses publicly exhibited in the US and a contingent of riders to the Chicago World's Fair in 1893.

As first wave of Lebanese /Syrian Christians began arriving in the United States, the fear of Muslims and Arabs and their stereotyping was already deeply engrained in US society.

Several times the horsemen at the World's Fair were admonished not to leave the fairgrounds because they were not Christians, but they were also heckled and taunted by the crowd because of their religion. By 1929, Muslims had built what is believed to be the first mosque in the United States on the prairie near Ross, North Dakota.

Yemeni Mosque, Dearborn



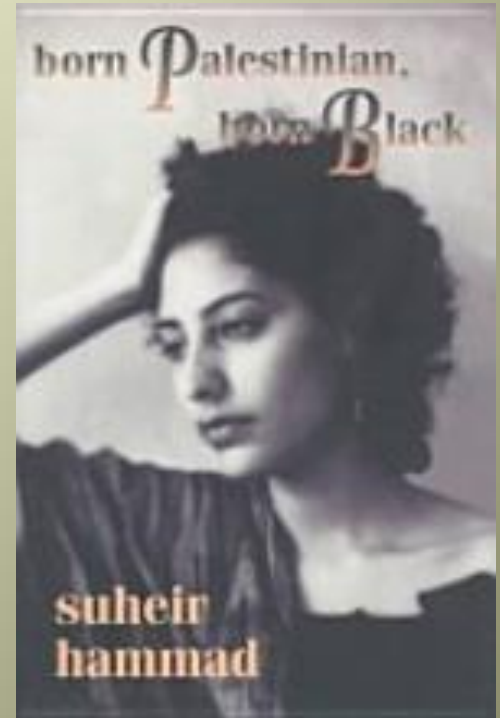


The Yemeni

- The Yemeni began coming to the US as early as 1904 to work in the Ford factories in Highland Park and Dearborn. Yemenis faced different challenges- they were Muslim, had darker complexions, and their country was the farthest from Europe. They were poorer and had less education.
- Three decades after the early Lebanese won their immigration cases, racial classification was still being used to attempt to disqualify them from citizenship. In 1942 in Detroit, Michigan, Ahmad Hassan, lost his case. Judge Tuttle noted the petitioner was “Arab” and “indisputably dark brown in color”. Yemenis would eventually gain their rights to citizenship.

The Rise of Subaltern Awareness

- Arab Americans are not a federally recognized minority and have no minority protected status.
- Major segments of the Arab American population had trouble identifying as white- they were not European descended. North Africans and those Arabs with darker complexions were forced after 1965 to check the “white” box on the Census. Muslim Arab Americans were having a more difficult time with discrimination.
- Palestinian Americans were increasingly felt at odds with US policy and identified less with the mainstream American population.
- There were always Arab Americans at odds with the Census classification who felt they were never really accepted as “white”.





The Rise of Political Identity

- From the 1950s on, there was a rise in the number of left-identifying activists (Lebanese, Palestinians, and others) began seeing themselves as an ethnic population separate from white or subaltern (although they did not use the term).
- Arab- American political activism began with the Association of Arab American University Graduates, the Arab American national organization in 1967.
- The American Arab Anti-Discrimination Campaign and Arab American Institute today are important Arab American organizations. These organizations promote pan-Arab (American) identity.



Stereotypes, Identity, and Pain

- ✦ A stereotype is often a generalization (sometimes based on a truth) that is then falsely generalized and applied to an entire group of people
- ✦ Stereotypes can also be created from false information and bias
- ✦ Stereotypes can hurt and damage the self-esteem of individuals, especially children, and can be the basis for discrimination.

Enduring Stereotypes of Arabs: 100 Years of Film Stereotypes

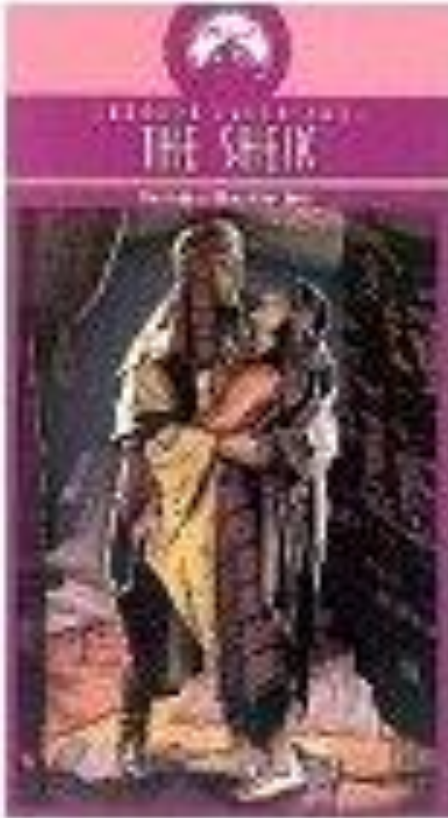
- ✦ Dr. Jack Shaheen, author of *The TV Arab* and *Reel Bad Arabs*, has classified and chronicled Arab images in hundreds of TV shows and movies starting with the era of the silent film.
- ✦ He says there have been three enduring stereotypes: “The 3 B’s”: Bombers (terrorists), billionaires (rich sheiks), and belly dancers.
- ✦ The fourth stereotype is Bedouins- nomadic, camel driving tent dwellers.
- ✦ Dr Shaheen feels that enduring stereotypes cause pain and damage self-esteem, especially for children.

Theda Bara; The Belly Dancing Vamp



- ✦ During the silent film era, Theda Bara created the first “Vamp” stereotype.
- ✦ She was Jewish and played Arab and Old Testament characters. She said her name meant “Death Arab” (it doesn’t) but she had a very successful career.

The Sheik



- ✦ A classical silent movie.
- ✦ The Arab males as dangerous, virile, desirous of western women, much as other men of color have been stereotyped.
- ✦ Sensual and barbaric “Arab” male kidnaps western women for his harem.
- ✦ To avoid myso-genation, we find out in the end he is a Spaniard kidnapped by the Arabs as a child.

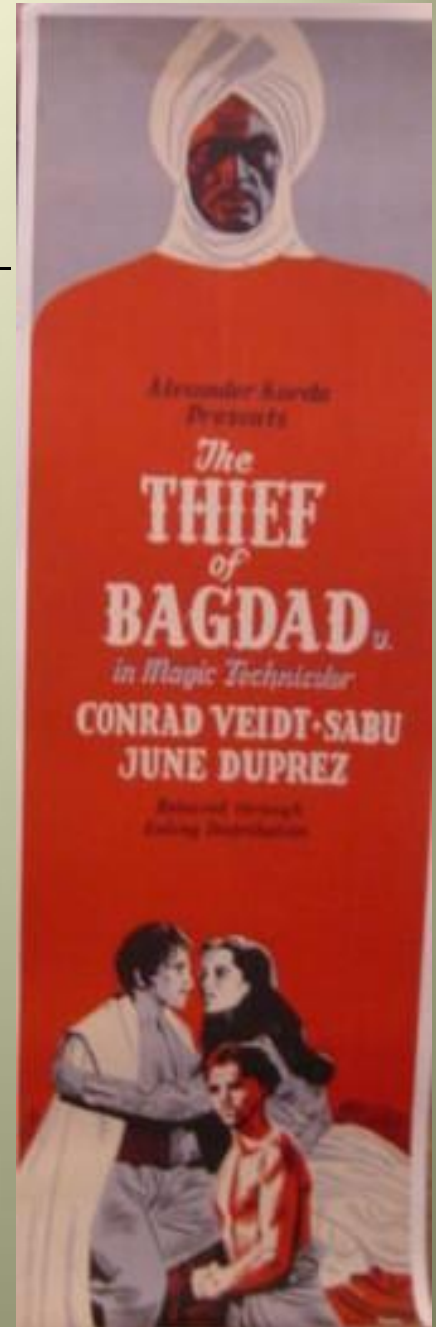
S & T Movies - 1930's and 40's



- ✦ Movie censorship was very strict in showing nudity, etc. except if the film was about the “exotic” East.
- ✦ There are repeated bathing scenes with nude women. Men entering harems and women’s veils being torn off.

Classic Orientalist Films

- ✦ The Thief of Bagdad mixed Indian, Persians. Chinese cultures.
- ✦ Denigrated women- the three princesses of Ababoo (made up nonsense names for them)-were to be wives of the Sultan.
- ✦ Idea of Arab marriages - selling women into slavery is found in many films.

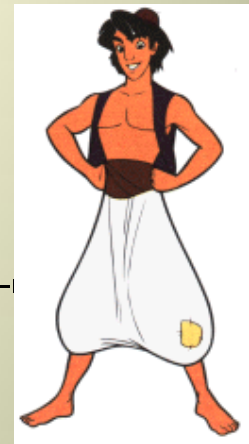


Mummy Films



- ✦ Classic genre- they sunk from Egyptian Pharaohs and leaders of their people to ghouls.
- ✦ The Arab male is still dangerous; even after death they are still stealing western women.
- ✦ Stargate: the Egyptian mummies are now aliens from outer space?

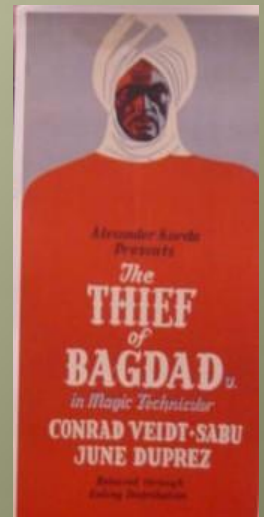
Disney's Aladdin



✦ Is there stereotyping occurring here by physical features?



Is this the same face?



The Siege



- ✦ Many Arab Americans objected to the ideas being portrayed in the film.
- ✦ Many Japanese Americans also found it insensitive to their experience.

Stereotypes, Bias, and Hate Messages in Music

- ✦ The recent Cure's Debut Album: "Boys Don't Cry" hit single called "**Killing an Arab**".
- ✦ The Clash punk rock band's famous single "Rock the Casbah" with strange words: "Sharif don't like it" - what does that mean?
- ✦ **A-hab the A-rab** was recorded by Ray Stevens in 1962 "the song portrays a "sheik of the burning sands" named Ahab. He is highly decorated with jewellery, and every night he hops on Clyde, his camel, on his way to see Fatima, who is the best dancer in the Sultan's harem, and is apparently a fan of various aspects of American culture. During the ride, Ahab "speaks" (actually, sings/chants in Arabian style) in a mock Arabic. (A later version adds the exclamation "Sold, American!")"
- ✦ "**Walk like an Egyptian**" by the girl's band, The Bangles, was a pop hit in 1986. The words are full of stereotypes.

Cartoon Messages





Post 9/11

- ✦ There have been a plethora of television shows where the Arabs and Muslims are all evil terrorists after 9/11 especially in detective and police type shows.
- ✦ There are even fewer, if any, positive depictions of Arabs or Muslims in the western media.
- ✦ Is this the trend for the future?

A Brief History of Anti-Arab American Discrimination

- ✦ Arab Americans have historically experienced less violence than African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans.
- ✦ However, while hate crimes against other groups is declining, hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans is increasing.
- ✦ Arab and Muslim Americans have been victims of targeting, profiling, and surveillance by police, the FBI, and the CIA based only on their ethnicity and/or religion.



Hate Crimes Defined

- “A hate crime is defined as violent acts against people, property, or organizations because of the group to which they belong or identify with”. Source: The American Psychology Association.
- Hate crimes are an attack on two levels: 1) against one’s physical self and 2) an attack on one’s identity.
- Racial and ethnic tensions rise during periods of economic downsizing and economic depression.



Arab Americans and Hate Crimes

- ✦ Hate Crimes Against Arab Americans and Muslims were increasing before 9/11 –spurred by events in the Middle East like the Iran Hostage Cases, Arab-Israeli Wars and domestic terrorism.
- ✦ At least 272 Muslims were victims of harassment in the period immediately following the bombing of the Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma by a white racist.
- ✦ Eg. –An Arab American woman in her mid-20's miscarried her near term baby when her home was attacked by unknown assailants shouting anti-Islamic epithets.
- ✦ In the two weeks following 9/11, hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans rose by 500%.

Hate Crimes, Profiling and Targetting



- ✦ Hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans did not start on 9/11/2001.
- ✦ “Flying while brown” has been an increasing problem with many Arabs and Muslims taken off flights. Now we have a “no-fly list” with little or no recourse ore regress.
- ✦ Targetting and profiling, especially in Dearborn has been a problem for decades. Past mayors of the city, including Mayor Guido, ran on anti-Arab platform in 1985 promising to address “the Arab problem”.



The Nixon Era

- ✦ Arab American national organizations were created after 1967 and the ADC (American Arab Anti-Discrimination Campaign) was established in response to death threats and harassment against activists.
- ✦ President Nixon had large numbers of Americans placed under surveillance including civil rights activists, anti-war protestors, and others. Arab Americans experienced heavy unjustifiable FBI surveillance.



The Abdeen Jabara Case

- ✦ The heavy FBI surveillance of Arab Americans was ended by the efforts of a Michigan lawyer and activist that sued the FBI for harassment for exercising his first amendment rights. His case coincided with the Watergate revelations of illegal wiretaps. The ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) took his case and he finally won it in 1984.
- ✦ FBI harassment again peaked after the first Gulf War.



✦ Nagi Daifullah the Yemeni Muslim labor organizer and farm worker was one of two farm workers killed as they worked with Cesar Chavez to gain rights and protections for the farm workers during the grape strike in the summer of 1973. Some Yemenis, legal immigrants, still pick our fruits and vegetables in California.

Alex Odeh



- ✦ On Oct 11, 1988, Michael Odeh, Western Regional Director of the ADC, was killed when a bomb exploded as he opened the door of his office in Santa Ana, CA.
- ✦ The bomb killed Odeh, wounded several others, and did massive damage to the building.
- ✦ Alex was the father of three little girls and his brother was father Elias Odeh, a priest in the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. Alex was a member of the Roman Catholic Church.
- ✦ Alex had appeared on TV saying that Arafat was ready to talk peace (this was before the Oslo Accords).
- ✦ The FBI investigated 3 members of the Jewish Defense League that fled to Israel-no arrests have ever been made.
- ✦ Casey Kassam dedicated a memorial to Alex Odeh.



Muslim Individuals Killed

- ✦ A number of Arab and non-Arab Muslims have been targeted for their beliefs before 9/11.
- ✦ Professors Ismail and Lois Faruqui stabbed to death in their home.
- ✦ Other African American Muslims: Malcolm X was assassinated.



ABSCAM and Political Discrimination

- ✦ FBI agents dressed up as Arabs and tried to bribe U.S. politicians. This was a misguided, unjustified, and ill-fated effort that has had serious repercussions.
- ✦ In 2000, Mrs. Clinton returned \$50,000 in campaign donations from the American Muslim Alliance when her opponent, Lazio, called it, “blood money”!
- ✦ Dozens of other politicians have refused Arab American campaign donations as somehow tainted-even from the native born.



A History of Secret Trials

- ✦ The history of secret trials against Arab and Muslim immigrants pre-date the anti-terrorist of the 1990's.
- ✦ In the case of the LA8, a group of Arabs and Kenyans were accused of terrorism in the 1980's. They were imprisoned on secret evidence and held incognito. They found some leftist Marxist pamphlets but no evidence of terrorism. They were targeted for their politics and there was an 8 year court battle.
- ✦ There have been other secret trials before 9/11- many have been exposed to have been based on hearsay, disgruntled neighbors or spouses, and little or no evidence at all. This is the danger of secret trials. Some defendant's lawyers were not even allowed to see the evidence against their clients.



The INS and Internment Camps

- ✦ Mr. Minereta, a Japanese internment camp survivor, testified before the House of Representatives in June 16, 1991 that as early as 1979, there has been talk by the Departments of State and Defense to round up Iranians, Arabs, and other Muslims.
- ✦ A leaked INS report stated that a 100 acre prison in Oakdale, LA was being proposed as a site to intern undesirable Arabs and Arab Americans.

1989 Incident

- ✦ In July 1989, after the US hostage, Marine Colonel William Higger was killed in Lebanon, racist banners were hung in NY freeways saying: “Shi’ite Hunting Season Opens Today” and “Lets F14 Beruit ”.
- ✦ Pamphlets were also distributed in the Brooklyn’s Atlantic Ave true community entitled, “A Good Arab Is A Dead Arab”.
- ✦ Ed Koch, the Jewish mayor of New York City, visited the Arab community to reassure them.



Aftermath of the First Gulf War

- ✦ After the decision to deploy troops on August 8, 1990, the ADC reported a 100 fold increase in anti-Arab hate crimes.
- ✦ One Palestinian family in Maryland said they were victimized for 10 months – their home was egged, property was damaged, and they received threatening phone calls.
- ✦ In the year 1990-91, ADC reported 222 cases of hate crimes.
- ✦ In Michigan, ACCESS received hundreds of threatening calls and bomb threats. Twenty two cars in Dearborn had their windows broken. In Upper Michigan, one store owner had his store firebombed. He kept telling the media, “I’m not Iraqi”!



The Patriot Act of 2001

While the Patriot Act was designed to aid in the war against terrorism, Arab and Muslim Americans were disturbed by the focus only on Arabs and Muslims, seeing it as profiling and targeting.



Post 9/11

- ✦ Talk show pundits, the far right, and some radio hosts advocate everything from interning Arabs in the US, to ethnic cleaning, to mass punishment, to torture.
- ✦ Ann Coulter: “We should invade their countries, kill their leaders, and convert them to Christianity. Congress should pass a law tomorrow requiring that all aliens from Arabic (Arab?) countries leave... we should require passports to fly domestically...”
- ✦ Alan Dershowitz Harvard Professor: “ The real debate is whether torture should take place outside of our legal system or within it, the answer seems clear: if we are to have torture, it should be authorized by law”.



Post 9/11 Reactions

- ✦ In the hours and days after 9/11, hate crimes against Arabs and people mistaken for them rose by 500-1000% (many went unreported out of fear).
- ✦ In a Chicago suburb, a mostly white crowd marched on a mosque and were stopped by police. One female marcher told the press, “ I’m proud to be American and I hate Arabs and I always have”.
- ✦ In Arizona, a Sikh (a non-Muslim, non-Arab) gas station clerk was shot and killed.



Post 9/11 Reaction: The Round Up and Deportations

- ✦ By late November 2001, The United States rounded up, detained, and deported over 1200 persons, many were held incognito and were not allowed access to lawyers or to even know why they were being deported.
- ✦ Overstaying a VISA, previously a minor offence, became a Federal crime overnight.
- ✦ Hady Hassan Omar was arrested and held 73 days in solitary confinement- he placed a reservation at the same Kinko's as one of the hijackers. He was eventually cleared and released.
- ✦ Osama Elfar worked at Trans States Airlines in St Louis- he was held 10 weeks and deported to Egypt. He had lived in the US since 1996. He still does not know why.



Gulf War II

- ✦ Arab and Muslim Americans braced for a new round of hate crimes

The war spawned more anti-Americanism in the Middle East and Muslim World.

- ✦ Many Arab Americans feared new terrorism against the U.S. in the aftermath of the war and increasing backlash against Arabs and Muslims in America.



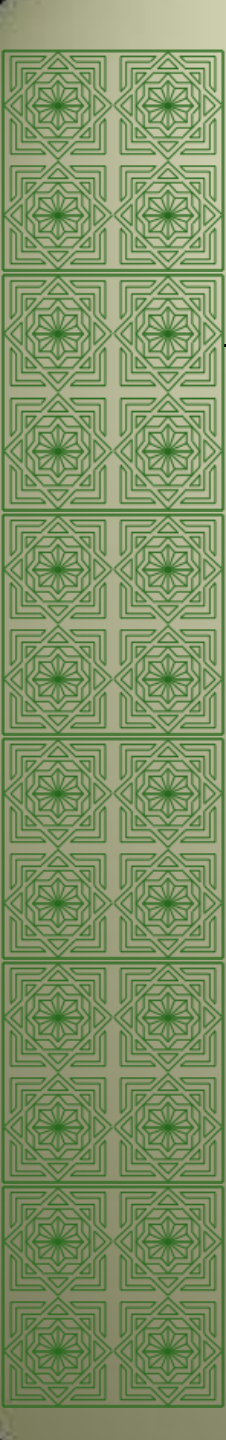
New Threats

- ✦ “Roger Stockham was arrested Jan. 24, 2011 by Dearborn Police in the parking lot of the Islamic Center of America, where hundreds of people were attending a funeral in one of the largest mosques in the United States.
- ✦ High-end class C fireworks, including M-80s, were reportedly found in his car, though police are not reporting how much.
- ✦ Stockham was arraigned on Wednesday, Jan. 26, on counts of a threat of terrorism as well as possession of explosives with unlawful intent”.

What about their Future?



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