

The Image of the Arab World in the Spanish and Latin American Journalistic Discourse: Immigration as an Example

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Abstract—Spain's and Latin America's perception of Arabs is conditioned by a set of labels. This article aims to study the (re)presentation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in both Spanish and Latin American journalistic discourse. The researchers, through the use of a series of lexical and rhetorical resources, demonstrate that, this discourse effectively contributes to the generation of labels about the population of the study in question. Our corpus of analysis is essentially made up of newspaper articles with national and local circulation (*El Mundo*, *El Diario de Sevilla*, *El Tiempo*, *Libertad Digital*, etc.). The methodology followed in the analysis is based on the theories of Van Dijk about discourse and racism in Spain and Latin America.

Index Terms—the Arab world, journalistic discourse, immigration, discourse analysis, Van Dijk

I. INTRODUCTION: CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The Arab and Muslim world is still seen as exotic by both western and Latin American societies. Despite the connections that unite the East, the West, and America (migrations, political, commercial, and cultural relations, etc.), the collective image of the Arab continues to acquire very negative nuances in most of these countries. On the one hand, Spain is one of the European countries that have had the most contact with the Arab world, especially with Morocco. The history of the country establishes an unquestionable link with Islam and the influences of its culture throughout the Spanish territory. At present, immigration is one of the essential sources of contact between the Muslim community and Spanish society. On the other hand, the Arab presence in Latin America dates back to the beginning of the arrival of the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century. Their large community was of Arab origins and was mostly composed of Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. In this context, Latin America had different Arab migratory waves from the Middle East, which implies that Arabic culture has also left a considerable influence on these countries in different ways.

In these processes of civilizations' dialogue, the role of the media is essential. According to Van Dijk (2005, pp. 5-6), the major and most influential forms of institutionalized racism today, however, are to be found in the mass media. Research in many countries has shown, time and again, that the mass media are the main source of racist beliefs (...) research shows that people's everyday beliefs about immigration or minorities are not usually based on daily experience, but on the mass media.

The influence of media on current societies is large since they open door to realities that, on many occasions, remain outside the citizens' experience. Thus, images about Arabs and Muslims mostly originate from stories drawn from some media sources forming the public opinion. The journalistic discourse, therefore, plays a key role in guiding the recipients' thoughts and attitudes. It informs them about the events that happen every day and teaches them how they must be interpreted.

Linguistically speaking, language is the element that materializes the purposes marked by journalists. The latter creates an image of the collective based on several discursive strategies that, in turn, are carried out through verbal elements, such as the lexicon, rhetorical figures, and syntactic structures. These elements are joined together to create a completely stereotypical image of an entire group that lives in the host country.

The objective of this study is to analyze the linguistic resources in the Spanish and Latin American media discourse when representing the Arab world in its publications. We will demonstrate that journalists develop a series of discursive strategies that seek to categorize and criminalize the Arab collective through a highly connotative lexicon and rhetorical figures that deeply contribute to the demonization of the figure of the other. At the same time, this study holds a comparison between the representation of the Arab world in the Spanish press to that in the Latin American press in order to highlight the similarities and differences in the treatment of the other.

The methodological approach of this study employs the discourse analysis theory, with a special focus on Teun Van Dijk for its theoretical and research contributions in this field, especially in his works *Discurso y racismo* (2001) and *Racism and Discourse in Spain and Latin America* (2005). According to the Van Dijk approach, the researchers will

analyze the verbal utterances that reflect the representations of the figure of the Arab immigrants in the Spanish media discourse that manifest in two levels of the text: macro and micro structures. The structure of the text and the arrangement of the news, for example, belong to the macro-structural organization (an element of analysis to examine the general meaning of the text observed through theme/topic of discourse). On the other hand, lexical, morphological, Syntactic, semantic and rhetorical resources are part of the microstructural organization. They describe the local meaning of the observed text through the choice of words, sentences, and paragraphs. According to Chakour (2014), these elements are joined together to facilitate the interpretation of the journalistic message and, above all, develop a critical perspective to read the texts that use different means or ways to express their meanings.

In our analysis, we will limit ourselves to the microstructural analysis of the linguistic resources that reflect the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Spanish and Latin American press. This study examines these resources highlighting two discursive strategies that we have set out to analyze: the criminalization of the immigrant figure and the increase of the number of immigrants from Arab countries. Therefore, the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Latin American press demonstrates the prevalence of two images: the erotization and the indirect criminalization of the figure of the Arab.

II. THE ARAB WORLD IN THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

A. Spain

In Spain, cultural diversity is a recent fact in history, which requires special security measures. Clearly, it is assumed that Spain has been a homogeneous society, progressively, losing ground with the incursions of waves of immigrants. This is, at least, the image that is transmitted to us through the media. For most of the time, it is adopted by many of the native population, given the great influence of media discourse in manipulating thought. However, according to Balta (2001), we must not lose sight of the fact that the figure of the Moor has always been present throughout history in the collective imagination of the Spanish society.

Immigrants are seen as a threat to Spanish culture and identity, especially the Arab and Muslim immigrant population (Chakour, 2014, p. 41). We can give the example of the former Catalan leader Jordi Pujol, who, on October 2, 2002, declared that:

immigration to be one of the problematic facts of Catalonia of the last year, he insisted that it is a general problem in developed countries but in Catalonia, it has specific significance because immigration can affect our identity. He then says: we cannot lose sight of the fact that a central culture of reference must exist, that is what we have been working on for centuries (El Pa í, Oct. 3, 2002).

The construction of image of the other is formed according to the cultural, historical, and social realities of the Spanish society that creates it. The geographical paradigm always has a great importance. According to Martín-Muñoz (1999), the geographical factor has particular impact in the case of Muslim Arabs, since they have not only been their neighbors, but, for eight centuries, they have coexisted with the Moors. In this sense, it seems appropriate to highlight some aspects of the image of the Arab immigrants (or Moors, a word that reflects prejudices inherited since medieval times). According to Balta (2001, p. 31), the horizon of Spanish life is dominated by the contrast between the Christian and the Moor since the fall of Granada in 1492. The alien is both Muslim and a foreigner and the presence of Muslims in Spanish society does not contribute much more than the annihilation and destruction of the Spanish identity.

This media image of Arab and Muslim immigrants is preserved in Western countries, in general, and in Spain, in particular. It has aroused exclusive political speeches on the immigrant population in Spain, particularly, the one that belongs to Arab and Muslim traditions. It is very important to add that the representations of the everyday lives and concerns of Muslim immigrants are seldom covered. Their negative acts, especially crimes and drugs, are stereotyped, whereas their major contributions to culture and society—except in sports and entertainment—tend to be ignored or belittled.

B. Latin America

The Arab presence in Latin America dates back to the arrival of the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century. A large community of Spaniards are of Arab origins, mostly composed of Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians:

The first Arab immigrants in Latin America arrived in the late nineteenth century when the Ottoman Empire still existed. Because of their arrival to Latin America with Ottoman passport, many people identified them as Turks. This still persists in the popular mind and does not fit any racial categories (Guzman, 2000, p. 23).

In this context, Latin America had different Arab migratory waves from the Middle East. The first one was between 1870 and 1900, due to the Turkish domination that led many Arabs to look for other cozier lands. The second wave of immigration was between 1900 and 1914 because of the English and French occupation in the Middle East as a consequence of the First World War. And finally, the third wave occurred following the occupation of Palestine in 1948 and in 1974 because of the civil war in Lebanon.

Latin America is, therefore, a continent that has strong ties with the Arab world, due to the existence of millions of descendants of Arab immigrants living there. Their settlement stories in Latin American lands, social integration, and economic and political contribution have resulted in Latin American narratives and media representations reflecting the characteristics of their presence (Tosan, 2014).

In recent years, South America and the Islamic Arab world have significantly enhanced interregional ties in political, economic, commercial, and cultural domains. This is evident in the emergence of these ties in their common agendas and in the educational and cultural networks, among others, as seen in the media. Likewise, despite the geographical and cultural remoteness, the uprisings that occurred in the Arab world since the end of 2010 did not go unnoticed in South America. The increase in links with Arabs, the presence of broad oriental communities in South America, and the permanent interest of intellectuals and media contributed to bringing these events closer to the spaces of political, academic, and journalistic debate. More recently, the regional war scenario, the mass migrations in Syria, the Israeli bombings in Gaza, the rise of the Islamic State have further enhanced the interest in the local scene (Vagni et al., 2016). According to Vagni (2016), this interest has not been accompanied by ameliorating the image of Muslims or Arabs in the intellectual, journalistic, or, sometimes, academic perception in South America. It is still usual to observe the persistence of entrenched images and perceptions when counting and explaining the realities of the Arab-Islamic world.

III. REPRESENTATION OF THE ARAB IMMIGRANT IN THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN MEDIA

At present, media are considered one of the main sources of knowledge and training. They are conceived as true reflexes and transmitters of the social, economic and political realities of a given society, regardless of whether this reality is true or not. They perform, according to Tabares (2000), a very decisive mediation task between reality and people. Television, radio, and the written press play an increasingly important role through which politicians, economists, and academics have the possibility of accessing large audiences. However, in the words of Marín (1994, p. 207):

One needs to conceive the media in terms of truths and falsehoods and independence and alignments. It is a fact that we are already used to. The relevant thing is that the media, beyond lying or misinforming, manipulate and mold reality. They are, therefore, one of the most powerful linguistic instruments that provide us with indirect and mediated knowledge of our environment (Cited in Sa Paras, 1987).

According to Sánchez et al. (2005, pp. 107-108), "There can exist what is called informative objectivity since all means are always mediated by partial interests of ideological, economic or commercial types". In addition to this categorization, according to Tabares (2000), the media, by their very nature, affect a label of reality. At the same time, they are also transmitting culture. Therefore, they have the power to set the public opinion of readers who do not have direct access in their daily lives.

The means most used by ideological power groups is the written press, although the latter never lives isolated from news agencies, television chains and advertising companies. It is the most conducive means to reflection and analysis, provided that we are aware of the interests defended by each newspaper and have the precaution of diversifying our reading sources. In this sense, says Chomsky (1986), the press, always dressed in features of objectivity, is increasingly an instrument of informative manipulation and biased communication. However, the same author insists, despite everything, it remains the best possibility of accessing the reality in which the game is won to radio and television. For this reason, it will be necessary to consume it, but from a critical attitude and systematic analysis of its contents.

In the case of Arab immigrants, for example, their image presented by the different newspapers, television, and radio channels in Spain and Latin America is unipolar. In Spain, the propensity of a topical vision of small boats, victims, queues of people who want to regularize their situation, confinements in churches or hunger strikes are topics that are exploited by the press to stereotype them. Thus, the repetition of some arguments or the use of certain images, which imply a fundamentally problematizing discourse of the Arab immigration presence in Spain, are common and are hardly inevitable in the press and in the informative programs on radio and television. According to Ripollés (2004), the image of Arab immigrants offered in Spanish journalistic discourse is quite negative. The insistence on associating immigration and illegality through spreading information on the arrival of small boats, for example, deprives immigrants of their rights and legitimizes their marginalization and criminalization. In this way, a unique and stereotyped image of all immigrants coming from Arab countries is created, regardless of their circumstances and conditions.

According to Chakour (2014), journalists resort to the polarization strategy among us (the natives) and they (immigrants, more specifically Arabs in this case) to legitimize such attitudes, interpreted as discriminatory by immigrants. It constantly highlights the positive attitudes of the host society, which offer an opportunity and hope to immigrants and the negative ones that cause problems and instability in Spain.

Most of our knowledge of the world undoubtedly emanates from the variety of news and reports that we daily read or listen to. Van Dijk (1997, p. 53) underlines this idea assuming that:

The western press, especially the right-wing press, (re) produces and underlines, in addition, a negative image of minorities, immigrants, and refugees. Therefore, it contributes to the growing manifestations of intolerance, prejudices, and discrimination against those who come from the third world, both in Europe and in America.

As for Latin America, according to the historian Antonia Robledo in his article: "Turkophobia Anti-Arab Discrimination in Chile, 1900-1950" (1994), the Arabs were more exposed to criticism and defamation for having been stigmatized as a lower ethnic group. Complaints made through the press that Chilean media used pejorative arguments to belittle the Arabs. Having these prejudices helps generate generalizations of falsified information, that is, in the formation of stereotypes. People assign attributes that are consistent with their own beliefs and prejudices, and in this

way, the analysis of and the beliefs of another group is carried out from the powerful's perspective, forgetting that the other culture is based on different values and culture. In this way, Chilean society valued Arab immigrants from its own patterns and normative criteria, a situation that resulted in contempt for the foreign group.

IV. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE VERBAL RESOURCES USED IN THE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE FIGURE OF THE ARAB IN THE SPANISH PRESS

In the analysis of our corpus, we observe the use of two discursive strategies contributed to the distortion of the figure of the Arab immigrant:

1. The negative theming of the migratory phenomenon, linking Arab immigration, especially Moroccan, with drugs, crime, social disintegration, cultural deviation, etc., and
2. the exclusion of the figure of the Arab immigrant of the host society, considering the immigrant as an alien and distortion of the Spanish national identity.

These people present themselves as an enemy or a threat to the security and stability of the host society. Paradoxically, it is perceived, in some journalistic texts, especially interpretive and opinion, as a dramatization of the migratory phenomenon that induces shock rather than fear. The drama of the phenomenon is shown, describing the unfortunate situation in which the collective mass, its poverty, its idiomatic difficulties, etc., generates an "emotional reaction of compassion and piety by the receiver" (Rizo, 2001). However, the two strategies that most predominate our corpus are the criminalization of the figure of the immigrant Arab and the increase of the number of Arab immigrants arriving at the peninsula.

Now, we are going to study the verbal resources that reflect the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrants in the Spanish media discourse manifested on two levels of the text: the structure of the text and the arrangement of the news. As we have clarified in the introduction, our analysis is limited to the microstructural analysis of the linguistic resources collected for the analysis of the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Spanish press. The operation of these resources will be studied in each of the two discursive strategies that we have set out to analyze, that is, the criminalization of the immigrant figure and the increase of the number of immigrants from Arab countries.

A. *First Strategy: Criminalization of the Figure of the Arab Immigrant*

In the criminalization of the figure of the Arab immigrant, journalists launch a series of lexical elements that define these people in terms of crime and illegality. The group belonging to these lexical fields places the Arab immigrant in the category of social conflict and crime. It is a decisive resource that affects the construction of a discourse of negative otherness with respect to the collective. It highlights the criminal or conflicting relationships of some of these people and obvious legal normality in their behavior (Nash, 2005). In the lexical analysis of this strategy, two essential aspects have been detected on which we will base our analysis:

- a) The use of a valuation lexicon that connotes and, on many occasions, denotes violence, aggression, illegality, etc., linking these practices directly to the migratory phenomenon.
- b) The abundant use of demonyms that underline the immigrant-origin of the collective attributing the absolute responsibility to cause instability and insecurity in the host country. The immigrant's nationality is present in most corpus managed in this regard.

Journalists use a lexicon with highly valuable connotations. In the criminalization strategy of the figure of the Arab immigrant, verbs greatly contribute to the projection and creation of the image of a criminal and criminal immigrant, which originates only conflicts in the host society. This strategy can be perceived in the example we show below:

(1) Stop a man after burning his 17-month-old son with a cigarette

A man was arrested in Zaragoza last Saturday as the alleged perpetrator of a crime of domestic violence by assaulting his wife and their son. Nouredine Z, 48, was brought to court, after being denounced by his wife for having assaulted her and the son of both, of 17 months, inside the conjugal domicile. The 38-year-old wife suffered blows to the back, face and legs, and the baby burned with the coals of a cigarette on the right cheek and caught a foot with a door (El Mundo, 24/3/2018, p. 18).

In this fragment, verbs such as assaulting, burning, and suffering are part of the terminological repertoire belonging to the field of violence, fear, and terror. These concepts are strongly associated with the Arab immigrant collective in the Spanish press, which is defined as solely responsible for the production of threatening events to the country's security. Let's look at the following fragments:

(2) 8 Moroccans have been freed from mafia.

Eight Moroccans have been freed after being abducted for not paying the Mafia that brought them to Murcia. The traffickers falsified legal documents for the immigrants, who were undernourished and crowded onto a farm near Malaga (La Verdad de Murcia, 07/07/2000).

(3) Detained 9 "without papers" with 60 kilos of hashish in tariff.

The Civil Guards arrested nine immigrants yesterday 4.5 miles south of Punta Paloma, in Tarifa, in a boat with 60 kilos of hashish pollen (...) the immigrants were transferred to the port of Tarifa, and, after an inspection, the agents found 60 kilos of hashish inside the boat. The Civil Guards arrested immigrants, of Moroccan origin, all of them of are adults and undocumented at the time of their arrest (de Sevilla, 23/01/2015, p. 46).

In the second example, a direct link between immigration and mafia and between immigration and drug trafficking is established in example 3. Immigrants, in addition to being detected by police officers for drug trafficking, are presented as cunning suspects trying to divert the law and avoid the police. The subjectivity of the journalist in the choice of verbs appears very clear in this example. It is a highly connotative verb that underlines the cunning of immigrants and their ability to deceive. Many other verbs, with lower negative axiological connotations, could have played the role of describing this action. However, the author opts for the use of this description to accentuate the criminal features of these people, who should be always seen as distrustful.

In addition to the use of a highly connotative lexicon in the two previous examples, we observe, the presence of other elements that establish a direct connection between the nature of the crime and the origin of the immigrant. In the first fragment, for example, the fact of mentioning the name of the immigrant is a rare practice in this type of news, in which only the initials of the names usually appear. It really reveals the origin of the immigrant as an Arab (Nouredine).

In the second and third examples, a reference is directly made to the origin of the immigrant through the demonym Morocco. The outcome results in negative concepts such as crime and violence directly associated with certain nationalities, mostly Arab. The Former Interior Minister Mariano Rajoy declared that: *an excess of immigrants causes marginalization and crime* (La Verdad, 13/05/2002). The other Former Interior Minister of PP Mayor Oreja confirms this link explicitly in an interview with El Peridico on 26/5/20023: *Illegality normally leads to delinquency, then, to higher rates of crime when immigration grows. We have to associate the irregularity with delinquency, and the culture of legality is the best antidote.*

Therefore, we can point out a constant negative treatment of Arab immigrants in the media: It is in this discursive context that the explicit link between crime and Arab immigration arises. The Arab presence in Spain is increasingly depicted as the source of insecurity and crime. Spanish politicians and media recipients relate the excessive increase in crime rates. To immigrants: robberies, assaults, drug trafficking, falsification of identity documents, etc.

B. Second Strategy: Increase of the Number of Arab Immigrants

In the Spanish press, this constantly emerging discourse of Arab stereotyping invokes fear in citizens. According to Van Dijk (2005, p. 33):

Politicians think they can win votes among those citizens who are made afraid of increasing immigration, or who are concerned about crime and everyday feelings of insecurity, attributed to foreigners. Many concerns of citizens, such as unemployment, economic problems, or street crime, may thus be associated with immigration and by blaming the victims.

The representation of migratory flows, especially Arabs, is formulated from the elaboration of categories such as an avalanche, a wave, etc. This association of immigration with an unstoppable avalanche of people creates an ideology of fear that distorts the perception of real figures on immigrant settling in the country (Nash, 2005, p. 51). The evidence that there is an increasing number of non-community foreigners in Spain is perceived, to a lesser extent, by everyday practices than by discursive practices. The construction of immigration as a problem in Spanish society is a symbolic construction, and it can be seen as the product of speeches from various actors and social scenarios.

In this context, political and media speeches are especially influential. They refer to the huge number of people who overflow, above all, the Spanish coasts, in war or military metaphors such as "waves," "floods", "flows," "avalanche," "illegal," "invasion", "immigrant traffic", "Immigrant riots", "Bands of Immigrants", "Mafias", etc. Secondly, all of them serve to promote the idea that those immigrants are many and do not cause more than hostility (Chakour, 2014).

The great part of the journalistic examples in our corpus describing the arrival of Arab immigrants, attempting to convince us that the number of people who arrive by sea is very important and can denote threat and danger to the whole of the receiving society. Let's look at the following examples:

(1) 4.295 immigrants detained in Cadiz.

The 4.295 immigrants detained in Cadiz since January nearly quintuple the estimate for the same time period in 1999 (El Pias, 01/07/2000).

(2) The Civil Guards detain 141 immigrants.

The Civil Guards detain 141 immigrants in a mere 24 hours a long Spanish coasts. A Sub-Saharan arrived in Ceuta after having swum across the maritime border from Morocco. (Levante EMV, 02/07/2000).

(3) More than 400 'undocumented' immigrants arrive in the Canary Islands in the last 24 hours.

The arrival of Cayucos continues to the Canary archipelago. The number of immigrants moving towards the Canary Islands within just over 24 hours has increased to 419, after being rescued yesterday. Seventy-seven are without papers traveling in a boat that was located 165 miles south of Tenerife, as reported yesterday to EFE Fuentes of the Canary Islands. Government Delegation (El Mundo, 13/05/16, p. 30).

(4) The ship of 60,000 Moroccans collapses at the port of Algeciras.

(...) The operation out of these Christmas dates coincides with the Muslim season of festivals, which led to the number of Moroccan passengers who wish to travel to their country of origin. To attend to the enormous number of passengers who wanted to cross the Strait, exceptionally, during the early hours at 5.30 am advancing to Ceuta (El Mundo, 26/12/ 2016, p. 28).

In these fragments, another metaphor is commonly used, in the Spanish press, which describes Arab immigrants in terms of invasion, that is, an avalanche. However, in example (3), the adverb 'more' has been used to be an approximate

assessment of the number of arriving immigrants. However, this approach alerts the reader of the danger of the arrival of those people and magnifies their number. In example 4, the reference is made to people already living in Spain in their attempt to pass the holidays in their country of origin. The idea that the number of these people is enormous. They cause problems not only in their entry into Spain but also at their departure. The two terms of avalanche and wave have highly warlike and negative connotations, loaded with stereotypes and prejudices that distort reality and generate a state of alarm by promoting a feeling of threat and danger within the native population. These words also convey the idea of immigration as an unprecedented pressure that questions the possibilities of integration. This idea, once settled, can ensure social support for restrictive policies to contain migratory flows:

The repeated emphasis on the irregularity of entry, the huge numbers, the role of the police, and arrests contribute to first definitions that are very important in the development of attitudes about newcomers (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 48).

Before talking about the media representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Latin American press, we are forced to observe, according to Al-Amar's statement et al., (2021, pp. 61-62):

We can affirm that ambiguity continues to be one of the peculiarities of political discourse. This ambiguity consists, essentially, in not telling the whole truth, although, after all, it is not the responsibility of the language but that of the politician. With etiquette and understatement, euphemisms have become a professional medium and a policy among current Spanish politicians who use diplomacy to manipulate audiences. Furthermore, they also appear to adopt double standards, saying something nice and convenient up front yet knowing that reality is the opposite.

V. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE VERBAL RESOURCES USED IN THE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE FIGURE OF THE ARAB IMMIGRANT IN THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESS

In Latin America, the figure of the Arab began to emerge from the first arrivals of Spaniards to the New World. Their influence lasted more than eight centuries in the Iberian Peninsula. Subsequently, the Arabs, especially Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, arrived in the 19th and 20th centuries for wars. In this context, the Arab has always been represented as an exotic figure, distant, and with different customs and traditions. However, the attack of September 11, 2001 was a decisive point in the change toward the worst perceptions of the Arab in Latin America, since it drew on the social representation of Muslims as religious fanatics. This misrepresentation is based on homogenizing all Arabs and Muslims for the misdeeds of Al Qaeda, falsifying all in the process.

In this way, a homogeneous idea about Muslims was built in the perception of public opinion as an extended image of terrorism including all believers in Islam against US citizens and their neighbors. This process of objectification has been clear in the different journalistic notes and in the statements of security officials, and even in the official reports of the agencies (Alcalá 2020).

In our research corpus, newspapers, such as *La Prensa* from México, *El Mercurio* from Chile, *Clarín* from Argentina, *El Tiempo* from Colombia, y *Las Últimas Noticias* from Venezuela, are examined. They are the newspapers with more news about the Arab world. The most addressed themes in the Spanish-American press: 1-The Arab Spring, 2-Islamic Movements in the Arab world; 3-Arab-Israeli conflict; 4-the Arabs in Latin America; 5-The war in Iraq; 6- Arab world and Latin America; 7- Conflicts between Spain and Morocco; 8- The immigration of Arabs in Latin America.

It is necessary to indicate here, according to Vilorio (2003), that the Arab in Latin America is still studied, discovered, traced, understood, and disorientated from academic, fictional, and vocabulary texts. However, this task is half done: the "Arab" is already part of the daily life of the American present. As can be seen, when dealing with Arab issues in the Latin American press, the thematic concerns are different from those represented in the Spanish press, due to the differences found between the historical context of Spanish-Arab relations and relations between the Arab world and Latin America. We observe the predominance of two main discursive strategies, that is, the exoticization of the figure of the Arab and its indirect criminalization. Next, we are going to give some examples of these two discursive strategies the Latin American press depicts.

A. First Strategy: The Exoticization of the Figure of the Arab

Exoticization can be understood as the loss of cultural diversity. It is the loss of great legacies of cultural traditions that are replaced by the exotic global cultural trend. Seeing the trend of the Latin press and how it represents the Arab, one would have no doubt that the Arab world was viewed with an eye of exaggeration that tended to fashion the oriental Arab civilization with exoticism, ambiguity, and irrationality. In Gharib's words:

Orientalism became a representation of the East as uncivilized, inferior and potentially in need of "intervention and rescue". Since saving the "Other" in the distant parts of the world needed dominant powers and political and military action, colonialism was based in the Arab world with strong motives to operate its various resources (Gharbi, 2016).

Next, we offer the following examples on the exoticization of the figure of the Arab taken from the Latin American press.

(1) 'Top' 5 of our food: Arab flavors that became coastal

It is no coincidence that a city like Barranquilla has the largest number of Arab restaurants in the country. But the culinary influence of the historic immigration of Syrians and Lebanese at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, extended beyond this city. It is recognized throughout the territory of the Caribbean Coast. It has become so ingrained that there are many anecdotes that record the sense of belonging to such flavors and preparations, with variations that result from the natural fusion with the local pantry. There are many Arab dishes that pass for typical coastal dishes today (El Tiempo, Colombia, 30/05/2021).

(2) The Muslim community with a mosque in Barranquilla that makes a donation.

In Barranquilla, there is a Muslim community that for approximately 15 years has been immersed in the social problems of the city and decided to contribute a percentage of their savings to the vulnerable population. His most recent social work was carried out on the weekend of May 23, with a thousand items of clothing and 400 markets. It occurs just when it is known that 61.5 percent of families in Barranquilla do not have the resources to eat three times a day, according to Dane. The 'shaikh' or religious leader of the community is Isa García, a 50-year-old Argentinian with a partner from Bumangués, whom he met in the United States and with whom he decided to establish his home a decade ago in the capital of the Atlantic (El Tiempo, Colombia, 15/06/2021).

(3) Arab ambassadors share their culture at the UNAM Film Library

Welcoming, Videgaray highlighted Mexico's interest in continuing to strengthen ties with Arab countries. He highlighted that as a result of the historic tour of the President of the Republic, Enrique Peña Nieto, to four Gulf countries in January 2016, work visits by high-level Mexican and Arab officials have increased. Typical dishes from the Arab region and the exchange of culture enlivened the meeting of ambassadors from seven nations of that region with Mexicans who met in the José Revueltas' room of the University Cultural Center in order to inaugurate the Arab film cycle that has, as its headquarters of UNAM, the highest house of studies in Mexico. Led by Hugo Villa Smythe, General Director of the UNAM Film Library, representatives from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Algeria, enjoyed a happy gathering where typical dishes from the invited countries filled the tables for those present (La Prensa, México, 28/06/2019).

B. Second Strategy: (In)direct Criminalization of the Figure of the Arab

After analyzing the image of the Arab immigrant offered by the Spanish press, a massive and systematic criminalization of Arab immigrants can be observed, almost always associating them with citizens' insecurity that immigrants constitute a danger to Spanish culture and identity. In the case of the Latin American press, it is clearly seen that this image is less negative due to the relative acceptance of Arabs in Latin American society, where Arab immigrants managed to adapt to the customs of the host countries without losing all features of their original cultural identities, achieving many successes at all levels. One can give the example of former presidents who were the sons of Arab immigrants such as the Argentine Carlos Menem (1989-1999), the Honduran Carlos Flores Facussé (1998-2002), and the Salvadoran Tony Saca (2004-2009). We cannot forget other celebrities such as the Mexican billionaire of Lebanese origin Carlos Slim or the Mexican actress Salma Hayek. Despite all this success, a new trend can be seen in the Latin American press after the attacks of September 11, 2001, where the Arab or Muslim is represented as a new enemy, threatening the destruction of the civilized world, without separating the individual or group action of a few people with the identity of a whole group of believers. Next, we offer the following examples on (In)direct criminalization of the figure of the Arab taken from the Latin American press.

(1) Islamic Terrorism in Latin America: Venezuela as a Base of Operations

The Caribbean country is one of the strategic points of radical Islamist groups in the region. Most of the discussions today among pundits, politicians and the media relate to the Sunni Jihadist/Salafist type of terrorism, as it is considered the most important global threat. According to Mehmet Ozkan, a professor at the Turkish National Police Academy, Latin American Muslims are very well connected to social media, through which many of them learn about Islam, Arab culture, and the Middle East. However, the strong presence of Latino Muslims in virtual spaces was not successful in attracting them to ISIS through these channels. As of 2017, a total of 76 people from Latin America (23 from Argentina, 50 from Trinidad and Tobago, and 3 from Brazil) are believed to have traveled to ISIS territory. If these numbers are true, they clearly indicate that Latin American fighters make up less than 0.003 percent of the total foreign fighter population. (Infobae, México, 10/09/2020)

(2) Arabs Ruling in Latin America.

Nor do you need to be of Arab descent to sell yourself to the jihadists. Hugo Chávez is the clearest example that anyone can serve as a pimp. When the students took to the streets of Caracas shouting Freedom! in protest against the Venezuelan dictator who wanted to stay in power for life, they were brutally repressed by state forces supervised by the Vice Minister of Internal Affairs and Justice, Tarek El-Aissami, in charge of Citizen Security, who was also deputy director of Identification and Aliens.

El-Aissami promoted urban guerrilla warfare when he was president of the student union at the Universidad de Los Andes. According to Phil Gunson of the Miami Herald, of the 1,122 people who lived in the ULA dormitories, only 387 were active students and more than 600 had no relationship with the university.

El-Aissami maintained political control of the residences, where stolen vehicles were hidden and drugs were trafficked. His criminal tenants used ski masks to commit misdeeds in the streets. Tarek's father, Carlos, runs the Venezuelan branch of the Iraqi Baath party, and his great-uncle Shibli el-Aissami was assistant secretary general of that political organization in Baghdad during Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. (Libertad Digital, Honduras, 22/01/2008).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Muslim world largely remains looked at as something mysterious to many nations, despite the fact that the evolution of today's societies has deeply connected these geopolitical boundaries over the past decades. History, in turn, establishes an indisputable link with Islam, and the influences of its culture throughout the entire Spanish territory are unquestionable. The presence of the Arab element in South America throughout the ages has, in turn, contributed to the creation of a stereotyped image of the Arab that has evolved over time.

As regards the (re)presentation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in both Spanish and Latin American journalistic discourses, we must indicate that it cannot be stopped categorically and generally. Here, we are dealing with an Islamophobia representation of this reality. Indeed, a negative and, to a certain extent, a stereotyped image of the Arab and Muslim world is transmitted, but the differences in the informative and, above all, editorial treatment between one newspaper and the other are so evident. It is difficult to reach a common conclusion of this type. On the other hand, it is not possible to speak at any time of informative objectivity, since media are always mediated by partial interests of ideological, economic, or commercial types.

Here it should be noted that the image of the Arab and Muslim world that is presented in the Spanish press is pejorative. It is because most of the news that is published on this subject has a negative tone linked to wars such as those in Iraq or Afghanistan, conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli attacks, terrorist attacks linked to the al-Qaeda network or the Islamic state, and violations of human rights, specifically against women and political dissidents. It is common for an image of Islam and Muslim countries linked to backwardness to be transmitted, in the face of Western modernity. The way of life and the political system of the Western countries is presented as an ideal to which the Arab and Muslim countries should aspire. In fact, Arabs and Muslims become more respected when their customs or virtues are more widespread in Western countries, that is, when the 'other' tries to resemble the 'self'.

Throughout this study, we have seen how journalists develop a series of discursive strategies that seek to categorize and criminalize the Arab collective through a highly connotative vocabulary and rhetorical figures that profoundly contribute to the demonization of the figure of the other. Undoubtedly, these strategies play an important role in denigrating the image of immigrants in public opinion. In conclusion, it is clearly seen, through the analysis of different newspapers that the criminalization of the figure of the Arab immigrant and the increase of the number of Arab immigrants that arrive in the Peninsula predominate as the most used strategies in the Spanish press about Arab immigrants.

In the case of the Latin American press, the image of the Arab immigrant is less negative where the acceptance, integration, and defense of Arabs is seen. This trend cannot be understood without taking into account the successful processes of social integration, product of the economic success, and the political visibility that Arab immigrants achieved in the second half of the 20th century in their diasporic homes in Latin America. It is not an exaggeration to say that the exoticization and the indirect criminalization of the figure of the Arab are the most prevalent discursive strategies in the Latin American press regarding Arab immigrants.

Lastly, taking into account the influence that the written media have on the formation of Spanish and Latin American public opinion on the Arab and Muslim world, it would be something positive and promising to see a greater effort on the part of the editorial boards. It becomes an obligation needed to balance the large volume of negative news and replace it with a more positive tone.

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