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Title of the Abstract: Giving a Voice to the Sahafiyat: Women Journalists Working in the Arab World

Abstract

When considering journalism coming from the Arab world one is often faced with complex and difficult stories from a troubled region. As a consequence the western world is quick to forget that the Arab world encompasses twenty-two countries and that the region is rich in culture and history. And yet journalism coming from the Arab world repeatedly portrays nations in constant war, backwards traditions and a controlling patriarchal society rooted in antiquated rituals and customs. Moreover, due to the fact that western societies often consume journalism written by male western journalists, our view on the region is therefore skewed in one direction, thus affecting our perception and connection to the Arab world and the mainstream journalism from the region.

To challenge the present paradigm and to present a different side to this reality this study will focus on some of the many women Arab journalists reporting on this reality. While not all countries in the Arab world accept women in their ranks, the truth is that some women have courageously been able to break the constraints imposed by patriarchal ideology and tradition. Step by step these Arab women continue to fight for their right to be called journalists while they face a hostile workplace often being intimidated by their peers in a society that still sees them as abnormal. In this sense this study will consider the slow but noteworthy changes happening in journalism coming from the Arab world while at the same time presenting some of the courageous female reporters.

To achieve this, this study will focus on a recent book that tells first-hand stories of the *Sahafiyat* - the Arab female journalists working in the region. By exploring the importance of this publication, this analysis hopes to address how the work conducted by these Arab women contributes to dispel misconceptions while reinforcing the fight for women's rights in the region. At the same time, this essay hopes to consider the value of this publication for academia not only in the Arab world but also in Western societies while also arguing for its just place in any modern communication studies concerning gender and representation.

Keywords: Arab, Representation, Women Journalism, Media, True Stories