

SUAD JOSEPH LAB: Media Project  
Representing Muslims and Islam in *The New York Times*: 1851 – 2020.  
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Anthropology

The Middle East and North Africa in U.S Media Representations: An Analysis of the Term  
“Bedouin” in *The New York Times* (1930-1939)

The term “Bedouin” was used by the West in reference to nomadic groups in the Arabian and Syrian deserts. I examined 311 articles published from 1930 to 1939, and critically analyzed 101 relevant articles where the term “Bedouin” was used by *New York Times* correspondents. I discovered that Bedouin groups throughout the Arabian and Syrian deserts were represented as bloodthirsty, uncivilized, and anti-modern. I argue that this depiction of a violent and uncontrollable society was used to justify Western colonial acts that would allow it to materially and ideologically control the people of the East. This misrepresentation by *The New York Times*, which is considered to be a liberal news source, engraved into American society that the Bedouins were barbarous and ill mannered. I suggest that such news media misrepresentation, which is persistent in the 21st century, served as an opportunity for the West to portray itself as heroic, modern, and advanced in order to depict portions of the East, specifically Bedouins, as backwards and barbaric. This research is part of an analytical project of *The New York Times* over 150 years conducted in Dr. Suad Joseph’s lab