

Anti-Americanism in the Islamic World

Research Abstract

Adam Wilkerson

Our research has led us to come to the conclusion that anti-American behavior has seen a spike in recent decades. The Persian Gulf War saw a jump in anti-American protests and flag burnings. My individual research in the Arab world shows a very large jump in the immediate Arab world at this period. Another small jump is noted during the Oslo accords. However, the largest surge of anti-Americanism is noted after the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. This led to overwhelming levels of anti-Americanism that are only rivaled by the recent recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel and the commitment of the Trump administration to moving the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. Alongside that, there is a very clear connection between anti-American sentiment and anti-Israel sentiment.

Before coding the instances, I was assigned a set of articles and books that cover a range of the literature on anti-Americanism. After this literature review, I audited a graduate level research methods course using the STATA software program commonly used in political science research. I hope to use the knowledge gained here for further research.

Individually, I was responsible for coding instances from articles reporting on flag burnings in the Arab Middle East. My data included a diverse range of countries from Morocco to Iraq. In this first cycle I collected articles in English from any newspaper reporting on the instance. In the second cycle, I collected articles from two Jordanian newspapers. Using my Arabic language skills, I collected articles from Al-Ghad, a liberal leaning news source, and As-Sabeel, an Islamic conservative source.

Ultimately, what I learned most from this project is how American foreign policy impacts the image of all facets of the United States abroad. One decision by one administration can set off a cascade of events and this research project gave me the tools to discover that and to discover how important quantitative and qualitative research is for uncovering this relationship. The Middle East is politically dynamic and this experience has encouraged me to continue my investment in learning and researching this region.