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Women’s eNews: Reaching Out to the Arab World

By Margaretha Geertsema-Sligh

This article examines how Women’s eNews, an independent online news service for women, reached out to the Arab world through its international news coverage from 2000 to 2008. It also considers how the news service reported on women in Afghanistan and Iraq during the same time period. Originally established as an American news service with a global reach in 2000, WeNews soon started publishing more international stories and then established an Arabic website in 2003. Using a mixed-methods approach consisting of an institutional analysis, in-depth interviews, and qualitative analysis of stories, this study shows that WeNews provided international news that challenged stereotypes of women in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Introduction

Today located barely a block from the site of the 9/11 terrorists’ attacks in Manhattan, Women’s eNews was launched in 2000 as an independent online news service for women. It describes itself as both a news service “covering issues of particular concern to women” (Covering women’s issues, 2012) and one with an international reach: an “unbiased source of underreported news about women throughout the world” (Why Women’s eNews has an Arabic site, 2012). The addition of an Arabic edition makes WeNews an especially interesting case study of news for women within an international news framework. It poses questions about the news representation of women, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, during a time of war in the region.

The aim of this article is to consider the role of WeNews as a

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global and feminist news service through a mixed-methods approach, including an institutional analysis, interviews with staff members, and a qualitative analysis of story content. *WeNews* stories during this timeframe were able to give voice to women of Afghanistan and Iraq, and they challenged stereotypical representations of these women.

**Globalization and News Flows**

International news flows have historically been one-way from the North to the South, but the era of globalization has introduced new variations and directions of flows (Reese, 2005; Thussu, 2007). One-way flows are typically seen as domination of the U.S.-led Western media internationally and as a potential source of cultural imperialism and homogenization of culture. However, instead of exporting standardized media content, media content is also regionalized or localized to better serve audiences. News media use the regionalization strategy to “provide a regional perspective on issues relevant to their respective readerships” (Thussu, 2006, p. 169). Efforts to regionalize and localize are fueled by an understanding of active media audiences that prefer to consume products that exhibit cultural proximity (Straubhaar, 1991). The creation of an Arabic language website by *Women’s eNews* can be seen as an attempt to regionalize the service’s offering in the Arab world.

**Transnational Feminisms**

Contemporary transnational feminisms are viewed as multi-directional movements, with women collaborating across national borders. Earlier feminist efforts from the West, and in particular the United States, were often considered to be one-way (North-South), perhaps even hegemonic or imperialist (Basu, 1995; Grewal, 1998). What has been called “global feminism” typically construed American women as saviors and rescuers of oppressed women elsewhere (Grewal, 1999). At least since 1985, women in the South have challenged the dominance of the North in terms of leadership of the feminist movement, and many new initiatives have developed in the South (Tripp, 2006).
Afghan and Iraqi Women in the News

A vast literature exists about the U.S government’s cooptation of women’s rights to legitimize the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq, the more general problem of “saving women,” and media coverage of women in these two countries. For example, Abu-Lughod (2002) explained how earlier colonial and missionary rhetoric on Muslim women is replicated in recent calls for the liberation of Muslim women. Cooke (2002) questioned the logic of imperialism that makes men the Other and women the civilizable. Similarly, Ansari (2008) pointed out that “Western feminists have often historically been complicit in this project by seeing themselves as ‘white helpers’ that champion the non-Western woman’s cause, but actually work within the bounds of imperial agendas” (p. 59).

Scholars have typically seen mainstream Western media coverage of Islam and of Muslim women (and men) as oversimplified, decontextualized, and complicit with U.S. administrations’ policies (Fahmy, 2004; Fowler, 2007; Klaus & Kassel, 2005; Schwartz-DuPre, 2010; Stabile & Kumar, 2005). Kumar (2010) argued that the media presented Islam in an Orientalist mode as a uniquely sexist, monolithic religion that is irrational and violent. In a study of articles in The New York Times, Mishra (2007) found that the dominant representation of Muslim men was as violent and dangerous, while Muslim women were shown as victims of oppression. The author concluded that these images served the same purpose: “They established the need to intervene to rescue the women and control the men” (p. 1). The veil, in particular, is used to signify the oppression of women in Afghanistan. Hunt (2002) argued that images of Afghan women “covered with mandatory burkas required by the Taliban are circulated to reinforce the position that ‘these people’ are backward … these [media] reports are part of the political campaign circulated through the media in order to rally support for Bush’s ‘war on terrorism’ (p. 116). Based on a survey of mainstream television news reports in the United Kingdom, Fowler (2007) found that the international news agendas “denied Afghan women access to media spaces throughout Operation Enduring Freedom. Afghan women were invariably the subjects rather than the agents of … debates” (p. 4).
(2004) also argued that images of Afghan women were used to justify U.S. foreign policy.

While mainstream news coverage from the West denied Afghan and Iraqi women a voice, local journalists also faced many challenges. According to Al-Rawi (2010), Iraq is the worst place in the world for journalists to live: “…thus, it is not surprising that the circumstances Iraqi female journalists go through are probably some of the worst in the world” (p. 223). Al-Rawi (2010) detailed how female journalists were killed, kidnapped, raped, threatened, and detained in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003.

Research Questions

The following two research questions were posed:

RQ1: How did WeNews reach out to the Arab world in its international news coverage from 2000 to 2008?

RQ2: How did international news stories in WeNews report on women in Afghanistan and Iraq in the same time period?

Methods

This study used a mixed-methods approach consisting of an analysis of institutional materials, in-depth interviews with three of WeNews’s employees, and qualitative analysis of WeNews stories.

Institutional Analysis

An analysis of the institution was conducted by studying news articles about WeNews, information about the organization on its website, and its annual reports. It also included an analysis of the geographical origin of stories. All stories published from June 9, 2000, when WeNews was launched, until December 26, 2008, and archived as international stories on the WeNews website at http://www.womensenews.org, were retrieved in May 2009 (N=535). This timeframe included the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, the invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, and the invasion of Iraq in March 2003.
In-depth Interviews

The researcher conducted face-to-face in-depth interviews (with approval from her institution’s Institutional Review Board) with three WeNews employees in New York City on March 10, 2009: Rita Henley Jensen, editor-in-chief; Corinna Barnard, senior editor; and Dominique Soguel, editor of the Arabic edition.

Qualitative Content Analysis

From the 535 stories collected, the author selected 69 stories that mentioned Afghanistan, Iraq, or both countries. This sample included 34 stories on Afghanistan, 25 on Iraq, and 10 on both countries. These stories were coded through an inductive process and organized into emerging themes.

Reaching Out to the Arab World

American Roots

The origin of WeNews can be traced to a 1996 roundtable discussion organized by the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, called Legal Momentum since 2004, and funded by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (Jensen, 2002). Three years later, in 1999, Rita Henley Jensen was asked to create a news service that would distribute news of concern to women and that would make women’s voices available to the commercial media. Jensen became editor-in-chief of WeNews in September 1999, and the service was launched on June 15, 2000. In 2001, NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund decided that WeNews was strong enough to stand on its own, and the service became independent on January 1, 2002 (About WeNews: History, 2012).

WeNews is registered in the United States as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, meaning that it does not have to pay taxes on income and that donors are eligible for tax deductions. Funding for WeNews comes from readers, private donors, commercial publications that republish its materials, and from about 16 foundations, including the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and the Rockefeller Family Fund (About WeNews: Who funds us, 2012). The financial crisis of 2007 made it very difficult for WeNews to continue its work, as many of these foundations had their endowments invested in the stock market (Barnard, 2009). How-
ever, *WeNews* survived. *WeNews* introduced advertising through sales networks in 2009, receiving a third of revenue from the advertisements sold by the networks (Annual Report, 2010).

**WeNews Goes Regional**

While *WeNews*, as an online news service, already had a global reach, a decision was made to publish more international stories and to translate stories into Arabic. Jensen (2009) said international issues were not part of the mission of NOW Legal Defense and, once independent, Jensen was excited as international stories “started to get pitched,” and started publishing them. The service then found a donor and started the Arabic version in 2003 (Morgan, 2006).

The *WeNews* Arabic website contains translations of stories originally written for the *WeNews* English website. English stories are completed in New York around 2 p.m. and then sent to a translator in Lebanon, who forwards the translated stories around 10 a.m. the next day for posting on the Arabic site (Soguel, 2009). Prospects for advertising revenue from the Arabic site, however, remain uncertain (Annual Report, 2010). *WeNews* plans to establish a bureau in Cairo, possibly with the collaboration of the American University of Cairo and another nonprofit media company there (Annual Report, 2009). Jensen also hopes to translate the website into Japanese, Spanish, and French “the minute we get the money” (2009).

*WeNews* states on its website that it has an Arabic edition because “the board and staff believed that was enormously important to provide accessible, unbiased news on global women’s issues, at no cost, to those in the region” (Why *Women’s eNews* has an Arabic Site, 2012). Soguel (2009) said the Middle East is an important area of the world for the United States to be in dialogue with:

It’s an area of the world where there is a lot of room for progress to be made at the level of women’s rights. It’s an area of the world that can really benefit from the type of coverage *WeNews* provides, but that they wouldn’t necessarily be able to access in the English language. It’s an area of the world where the mainstream media, like here, also really neglect women’s issues or it ghettoizes gender.
In its coverage of gender issues across borders, *WeNews* staff said they embrace journalistic neutrality. Dominique Soguel (2009), the Arabic edition’s editor, used the example of veiling to illustrate their stance:

The thing is, we don’t have an editorial line. Like, we haven’t decided ... We don’t decide these issues for others. We don’t decide like ‘we support the veil, we don’t support the veil’. It’s like it’s up to each and every context to settle that for themselves, right? But we will cover it and we’ll say, ‘Okay, these are what the proponents are saying. This is what the opponents are saying.’

Jensen (2009) said there is a different way of covering women’s issues than stereotyping women as victims or exotic Others: “They are not only victims, they are smart cookies. They are tough. They are strategic. They are the hub of the community, and they react and take on leadership roles and change.”

Jensen said *WeNews* avoids insensitive representations of women in other countries by obtaining stories from local correspondents: “We use local correspondents and they are reporting on women’s issues in that nation—so they are by definition attuned to what the issues are for women in that nation or community and therefore are able to avoid unintentional insults” (e-mail communication, May 25, 2005). Writers typically contact *WeNews* with story ideas:

We get lots and lots of inquiries, because as you know there’s fewer and fewer outlets for journalism ... Most enterprising journalists find us. They pitch us. The rule is that they have to send us a resume. And they have to send us a story idea and write it in English (Jensen, 2009).

Not only does the pitch have to be in English, the story should also conform to the service’s standards for writing:

You need to have a reporter who is going to be able to file in the condition that you need your story. Sometimes the condition—we will go for a story because it’s really great and the reporter
has great stuff, but it will come in needing many hours of editing, and we cannot—so we can only do those so often, because there’s not a lot of editors here. (Barnard, 2007)

While Jensen stated above that WeNews uses local correspondents, international news coverage seems to depend more on the (temporary) presence of contributors in certain countries. Soquel (2009) said many people (presumably Americans) reach out to WeNews when they are overseas:

A lot of people do reach out to us and say, ‘Hey, I am in this country, if you guys are interested in women’s issues, would you be interested in taking stories?’ Now, it’s a selective process, so it’s a matter of finding people who can actually write stories at the news standard. Like it’s not enough to be, ‘Hey, I’m backpacking through the Middle East, would you like to finance part of my trip for a story?’

This makes the international coverage of WeNews somewhat random. Barnard (2009) confirmed that location of reporters plays an important role:

[Our international coverage] is driven very much by what reporters, who we like to work with, are located where. Juliette Terzieff, for instance, you’ll see that when she was located in Pakistan, we got a lot of coverage from there. But she then came back to the United States, and our Pakistan coverage got pretty thin on the ground after she came back.

WeNews also recruits and coaches contributing writers. For example, Soguel (2009) said a young girl from Gaza was interested in writing for the service, and they worked together on a feature story.

**Audience**

Despite repeated efforts, it was not possible to obtain any meaningful geographic audience statistics from WeNews. The website states that WeNews learned during the summer of 2002 that most readers were based in North America and Western Europe, but “a
surprisingly high number of readers were based in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Arabic-speaking countries. In fact, the visitors from the Middle East ranked fourth—after North America, Western Europe and unknown—in frequency of visits” (Why Women’s eNews has an Arabic Site, 2012). With regard to the Arabic site, Soguel (2009) said visitors mostly come from Morocco, the United Arab Emirates, Syria, and Egypt. However, when asked for more information about the audience, the webmaster, Ariel Jensen-Vargas, said WeNews does not break up subscriber statistics by country (Jensen-Vargas, 2009, e-mail communication). Jensen-Vargas said WeNews had 32,156 subscribers in March 2009.

International Scope of News Coverage

WeNews published an average of 63 international stories per year from 2001 to 2008 (excluding 2000, as publishing only started in June). Based on the datelines, these stories originated in all six geographical regions of the world, as defined by the United Nations. The majority of stories were written from Asia (26.7 percent), followed by Africa (17.8 percent), Europe (11.6 percent), Latin America (10.8 percent), North America (9.5 percent), and Oceania (0.6 percent). However, a total of 19.8 percent of stories labeled “WeNews” seemed to reflect stories about other countries written in the New York City office. That brings the total percentage of stories written in North America to 29 percent, the biggest slice of the pie per region, with 71 percent of stories written from outside North America. This means that while the North American region produced more stories than other regions, more than twice as many stories in the international section came from the other regions combined.

Countries where story datelines were from most frequently were the United States (47), India (25), Kenya (22), Mexico (21), Israel (19), Pakistan (17), Chile (16), Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, and South Africa (12 each). Stories labeled “WeNews” made up the majority (106), bringing the total number of stories originating in the United States to 153. Even though the United States produced more stories than other countries, the combined number of stories in the international section originating in other countries came to 382.

Stories originating in Western Asia, the U.N. category that most
closely resembles the Middle East, accounted for 11.4 percent of all international stories. These stories (N=61) came from Israel (19), Iraq (12), Turkey (10), Lebanon (6), Palestine and the United Arab Emirates (4 each), Jordan (3), and Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Yemen (1 each). It is noteworthy that no stories originated from the following seven in the region: Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

**International Feminist Politics**

Jensen (2009) has strong opinions about the leadership role of American women in changing the lives of “other” women. Jensen said one of the reasons *WeNews* started publishing international news was because Jensen realized American women had to get involved: “I came to believe that if anything was going to change for women internationally, the women in the U.S. had to lead it. Plus, they had to be advocates of it.” Jensen made a similar statement earlier: “If the well-being of women across the globe was ever to improve, US women would most likely have to assume an important role” (quoted in Byerly & Ross, 2006, p. 217).

Even so, Jensen (2009) acknowledged that American women are often not well-informed about gender issues around the world:

> We’re enormously wealthy compared to many women across the globe. We have many freedoms, most particularly the freedom of speech, which the freedom of the press is closely related to. … So I think we’re very encouraging to other women. I think that’s one of the reasons why U.S. women don’t focus, because they know how well off they are. But on the other hand, the more we improve our status, the better shining role we are for women around the world who have less. (Jensen, 2009)

Jensen (2009) said those who dismiss ideas of gender equality as “Western” just use that as “an easy put down” to deny women equal rights. Jensen also acknowledged Jensen’s own and other American women’s positionality:

> What I would say to the women of the world is, ‘Yes, we have many shortcomings here in the United States, and yes, we don’t have the answer to everything, and yes, you have many an-
swers, particularly where you are and how you’re living, and we want to hear those answers and those resolutions and those goals respectfully.’ And what can I say? I am a captive of my own culture and my own history, but I’m a journalist and so I want to hear from them.

Soguel (2009) acknowledged conflicts between Western and other ideas in news coverage:

There is obviously an element of everyone wants to retain their authenticity, everyone wants to fight for their rights, everyone wants to make progress, but they want to retain a sense of cultural authenticity. And when you are making suggestions from the Western model, it can get cast as your colonialism, your Orientalism, your—you know, all the negatives.

*WeNews* also sees itself as playing a role in facilitating international feminist networking. Jensen (2009) explained that readers become aware of what women are doing in other parts of the world, and they connect and draw on each other’s experiences. Soguel (2009) said that *WeNews* indeed is creating these connections:

I think what *Women’s eNews* achieved with its Arabic site is creating a bridge of information at a very critical time when there’s a lot of need for dialogue, but that is also weighed down by a lot of stereotypes and prejudices on both sides. And if *Women’s eNews* is able to break past those barriers, then we’re in a good place.

**Media Coverage of Women in Afghanistan and Iraq**

The second research question asked how international news stories in *WeNews* reported on women in Afghanistan and Iraq from 2000 to 2008. That question was answered through a qualitative analysis of 69 stories that all mentioned Afghanistan, Iraq, or both, selected from the larger sample of 535 stories. Of the 69 stories studied, fewer than half that mentioned Afghanistan (38 percent) and Iraq (41 percent) originated in these countries, with
the remainder of stories being written from the United States. That, however, indicates some contrafow of news. An analysis of stories about women in Afghanistan and Iraq presented the following four themes:

**Facing a Harsh Reality**

News coverage of women in Afghanistan and Iraq showed a harsh reality that women in both countries previously faced and continued to face.

**Afghanistan:** *WeNews* shined a light on the hardships that women in Afghanistan faced but framed women’s oppression as an effort by the Taliban to show themselves as anti-Western and “truly” Islamic. Ongoing problems for Afghan women included death threats to a female politician, women setting themselves on fire because of their poor living conditions, violence against women, women’s unawareness of their rights, fundamentalist pressures, murder, illiteracy, honor killings, forced marriage, safety concerns, deteriorating national security, imprisonment, and addiction. Yet this oppression was shown as part of the Taliban’s resistance against the West.

**Iraq:** *WeNews* reporting also pointed out the difficult circumstances of women in Iraq. Ongoing problems included rapes, abductions, poverty, car bombings, mortar attacks, lack of schooling, kidnapping, shortage of electricity and water, lack of health care, shortcomings in the legal system, and conditions of refugees. Other ways Iraqi women struggled include gang rapes, prison rapes, politically motivated beheadings, and a 24 percent rate of illiteracy.

**Highlighting Women’s Agency**

Despite the hardships listed above, *WeNews* highlighted the agency and strength of women in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

**Afghanistan:** *WeNews* portrayed women as activists and powerful contributors to society despite danger. Much coverage dealt with women’s political participation in writing the new constitution, running for office, and becoming members of parliament. These actions were reported to often be dangerous, even life-threatening, for women.

**Iraq:** Women in Iraq were also shown as activists. For example,
an engineer, Sawsan Al-Barak, co-founded a women’s center that provides computer classes, legal advice, help for battered women, and instruction in English (Mehren, 2003, November 20). Zainab Al-Suwaij, executive director of the American Islamic Congress, was quoted as saying, “Women are the pioneers in rebuilding Iraq...If you look at the last 35 years, men were the ones drafted to the army and women were holding down the fort” (Martin, 2006, June 8).

**Questioning the U.S. Government**

Based on the harsh realities that women faced in both Afghanistan and Iraq, *WeNews* questioned the Bush administration’s role and commitment to women in these countries.

**Afghanistan:** Days after the 9/11 attacks, *WeNews* quoted Catharine MacKinnon, who acknowledged the role of the United States in the tragedy: “This is a man-made atrocity. We made the men who could, and did, do it” (*WeNews* staff, 2001, September 13). Jessica Neuwirth, president of New-York-based Equality Now, pointed out that the United States continued to empower the wrong men: “The U.S. is supporting warlords in the war effort ... giving them money and guns to fight Al Qaeda. That means they’re arming and strengthening the people we don’t want to strengthen” (Lombardi, 2002, September 8). Even the draft constitution, while supporting human rights, was questioned: “[It] does not guarantee equality for women, whose rights continue to be curtailed two years after the United States removed the Taliban from power” (Enda, 2003, December 23). Even so, *WeNews* also reported on what the Bush government perceived to be its successes in Afghanistan. The main triumph for the administration, appeared to be Afghan women helping to draft the new constitution, voting, and running for office. Several articles highlighted women’s political representation but also their ability to work in other jobs traditionally held by men.

**Iraq:** News coverage in *WeNews* also asked questions about the commitment of the U.S. government to the women in Iraq. The biggest problem after the U.S. invasion of Iraq was the ongoing violence, which made women’s lives unbearable. News coverage pointed out that the “gates of hell” have opened in Iraq with the country’s continuing violence and extremism (Gazzar, 2007, April
10). Even political gains were seen as unimportant under these circumstances:

Amid the violence and chaos racking many parts of the country, the constitution itself—not to mention the requirement of a certain percentage of female officials—is now widely viewed as an irrelevant abstraction to a public traumatized by the devastations of war. ‘When you interview women they’ll say, “Screw the constitution, where is my water?”’ (Azimi and Cartier, 2005, October 21)

While some people recognized the United States for “liberating” Iraq from a “bloody regime,” not all agreed about liberation: “‘What do you think, I’m liberated?’ [a woman] demanded in disbelief. ‘I’m risking my life talking. I’m dying for my people’” (Martin, 2006, June 8). Two stories urged the United States to withdraw from this country.

As with Afghan women, WeNews reported the Bush administration’s stated goals of helping Iraqi women as part of the war in Iraq. Progress for Iraqi women was almost exclusively reported on in the political domain, especially the guarantee of a 25 percent quota for women in government under the temporary constitution (Khalil, 2004, March 4). Not only were women seizing new political opportunities, they could now take religion classes and work as female journalists.

**Challenging Stereotypes**

Unlike most mainstream Western media coverage, WeNews challenged stereotypes about both Islam and the veil. In both countries, discussions of Islam focused on the important role of religion in politics. WeNews challenged the stereotypical idea that Afghan women would be liberated once they threw off the veil.

**Afghanistan:** In news coverage of women in Afghanistan, two sources were cited as agreeing that religion and politics should be separated in Afghanistan. One of them, Sima Wali, a native of Afghanistan and activist on behalf of women refugees, said, “We need to make sure that religion is not used again to suppress the Afghan people as it has been done in the past ... It’s not the fault
of Islam. It was really the fault of the Taliban” (Comiteau, 2001, December 11). Several sources pointed out that Islam was actually giving equal rights to women. Even so, WeNews reported that women may not be aware of their rights: “Although Islam gives them equal rights, a woman abused in the home does not realize she can turn to the legal system” (Ostrowski, 2002, November 18). Afghan women may lack decision-making power in practice, but “under Islam a woman’s consent is mandatory for any marriage and any use of force is considered a sin” (Mojumdar, 2007, October 7). WeNews also reported how a female politician based arguments on Islam: “Wardak has tried to counter the disapproval of religious conservatives by quoting from the Koran and drawing on narratives from the prophet Muhammad’s life to assert that women had a participatory role in Islamic society” (Mojumdar, 2005, September 18). Riffat Hassan, a feminist Muslim theologian, said, “Muslims have to become self-critical and say ‘there are many things we must set right in our own house’” (Benet, 2001, December 10).

WeNews challenged the idea that Afghan women would be liberated once they removed the veil. Several articles pointed out that “there is more to human rights than removing the veil, or burka” (Benet, 2001, December 10), and that “participation in civil society requires much more than permission to lift the burqa” (Ostrowski, 2002, November 18). While the “head-to-toe burka” was perhaps at times shown as a symbol of oppression, Afghan women were not represented as helpless. On the contrary, as shown above, they were often shown as strong and resourceful. Graves (2001, November 16) cited Rina Amiri as saying, “People see women shrouded in the burqua and they equate that with utter powerlessness. It’s become like a wall. But the burqua does not mean women are inherently weak. It just means they are working under very difficult circumstances. Afghan women have demonstrated that they are incredibly resourceful.” In fact, WeNews reported that some women continued to wear the burka as a safety measure.

**Iraq:** In Iraq, Islam was also not demonized. In fact, WeNews reported that a decision was made that Islam would be the official religion of Iraq and that Sharia law would be a “source of legislation.” Khalil (2004, March 4) cited a woman saying that women’s
activists would most likely approve of this compromise because they believe that “women’s rights can be maintained within a Sharia-based system.” In coverage of Iraq, the veil was mentioned only twice, showing the relative unimportance of the veil for Iraqi women.

**Conclusion**

This study found that *WeNews* originated in the United States, operates in the United States, and is funded primarily by American foundations. It created an Arabic edition by translating English articles into Arabic and posting them a day later. It was impossible to obtain meaningful audience statistics from *WeNews*, but it is clear that the service reaches beyond the borders of the United States. While the North American region produced more stories than other regions, more than twice as many stories in the international section came from other regions combined. Per country, the United States produced more stories than other countries, but the combined number of stories in the international section originating in other countries was more than double that of the U.S.

Some of the editor’s comments invoked images of Western feminism, yet Jensen is also aware of her positionality. *WeNews* was able to provide news that showed the harsh reality of women’s lives in Afghanistan and Iraq, yet it did not frame them as helpless victims. *WeNews* highlighted women’s agency, questioned the U.S. government, and challenged stereotypes of both Islam and the veil. Overall, this case study showed that an independent online news service for women was able to provide hard-to-find news of women in Afghanistan and Iraq.

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