Covering Muslim women in news discourse

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1. The Muslim women (MW) corpora
2. Keyword analyses: BBC vs. Arab News
3. Keywords: Arab News vs. BBC
4. Summary of (other) findings thus far...
Why Arab News?

- Established 1975
- Most widely circulated English speaking news source in the Muslim world
- Provides ‘emic’ ‘Muslim’ perspective to contrast with ‘etic’ ‘Western’ perspective of the BBC
- “Liberal”

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
The BBC and Arab News MW corpora

MUSLIM    FEMALE
Islam     woman/women
Muslim(s) female(s)
Islamic

Not necessarily articles *about* Muslim women
## The BBC and Arab News MW corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BBC Muslim Women Corpus</th>
<th>Arab News Muslim Women Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>3,269</td>
<td>3,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokens</td>
<td>1,896,230</td>
<td>2,255,908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
Keyword Standards

1. frequency ≥ 3
2. Log likelihood ≥ 38.41 (p < 0.000000000001)

Cross-check with Wmatrix (Rayson, 2008)
- Check reliability of manual analysis
- Reveal categories undetected by manual analysis
Key semantic categories: BBC vs. Arab News

GEOGRAPHY
WAR, CONFLICT and VIOLENCE ✓
POLITICAL ACTORS
CRIME ✓
RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM ✓
HIJAB ✓
OTHER
Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News
WAR, CONFLICT and VIOLENCE

defence, attack, suicide, attacks, militant, killed, died, bomb, death, ceasefire, militants, hostage, bombers, asylum, bombings, violence, hostages, refugees, gunmen, rebels, bomber, coup, dead, killings, kills, bombing, fled, troops, protests, conflict, armoured, injured, tensions, clashes, seized, military, attacked, tension, fighting, shot, armed, targets, blast, riots, die, threat, attackers, forces, army, threats
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>% of WAR + FEMALE articles (n = 329)</th>
<th>MW in WAR contexts are...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>Patients: victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Actors: suicide bombers with agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Actors: suicide bombers without agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Actors: other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>both Actors and Patients</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
-sanctioned television pictures showed an alleged woman bomber captured after her explosives failed to detonate. Israelis The Islamic militant group Hamas has used a female bomber for the first time in a suicide attack which killed four. A statement from the Israeli military said: "In Jerusalem. After that, armed groups began to deploy women as suicide attackers, in the hope that they would find it easier to avoid these security precautions to send a woman suicide bomber on this occasion. Q: [Israeli Government spokesman expert For the militants, therefore, deploying women suicide bombers remains a fraught tactic - instead of new recruits, smiling. Experts remain divided over whether female suicide bombers will be more widely deployed by al-Qaeda, whosearring. Roger Hardy says the network's occasional use of female bombers defies its conservative ideologues, who have argued schoolchildren being targeted. He later killed the two female bombers by using a remote-control device to detonate the were killed in the Iraqi town of Talafar by a woman suicide bomber said to have been sent by al-Qaeda. But the BBC of the shock their attacks create. Using women [in suicide attacks] transgresses on what is acceptable in Arab socm much of the shock their attacks create. Using women [in suicide attacks] transgresses on what is acceptable in A first time the Islamic Hamas movement had used a female bomber. This week's temporary freeze on movement carr complex. 3 of 6 Islamic militants said they used a female bomber for the first time because of security "obstacles. "It removes a major threat because such an unusual attack using female suicide bombers would have caused 'Female bombers' held in Pakistan Two sisters suspected of train monly chosen for suicide missions by the Tigers. Women bombers have also been used by Kurdish guerrilla groups le? Other experts disagree, arguing that the use of women bombers alienates the conservative Muslim constituency reat because such an unusual attack using female suicide bombers would have caused a lot of damage," a senior u
Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News

CRIME

police, trial, court, sentence, tribunal, arrested, offences, sentenced, alleged, jury, stoning, convicted, arrest, judgement, drugs, sentences, murder, punishments, guilty, released, charges, jailed, jail, rape, prostitutes, prosecution, indicted, arrests, suspected, inquiry, possessing, acid, solicitor, stoned, cocaine, charged, flogging
### Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News

**CRIME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>% of CRIME + FEMALE articles (n = 139)</th>
<th>MW in CRIME contexts are...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>50.36</td>
<td>Actors: accused of prostitution, adultery or indecency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>17.99</td>
<td>Patients: victims of sexual violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>Patients: victims other physical violence or threat of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>Actors: accused of suicide bombings/aiding terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>Actors: accused of working against the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>Actors: accused of breaking other laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News

RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM

hardline, radical, conservative, hardliners, Islamist, strict, radicalisation

- Bangladesh - with a population of 130 million people - is a conservative Muslim country where many people have traditionally regarded women as subservient to men. (BBC 1407)
### Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News

#### RELIGIOUS SPECTRUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
<th>% BBC articles</th>
<th>Oppression of MW attributed to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>ISLAM + HARDLINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>STRICTNESS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>CONSERVATISM (similar in Arab News)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>FUNDAMENTALISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>ISLAMISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>EXTREMISM (similar in Arab News)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>RADICALISM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
MW are hardly ever associated with this religious spectrum. Even when they are, they have no agency.

- The paper said the women became radicalised under the influence of their Islamic radical partners and in repeated visits to radical chatrooms, the expert was quoted as saying. (BBC 3440)
Concordance

directive, which asks 20 schools in the Iranian capital not to force girls to adopt the strict Islamic dress code. But the country’s hard-line religious constituency is made several raids in Tehran, in an apparent crackdown on women who flout the strict Islamic dress code. Witnesses said dozens of young women were held in the capital, Tehran, last week launched a campaign to insist women obey Iran’s strict Islamic dress codes. But on Sunday Mr Ahmadinejad said the policy would or selling western music and cafe owners serving drinks to women not wearing strict Islamic dress. Young people have also been targeted by the Iranian police.

a death sentence by stoning If carried out, it would be the first such stoning under strict Islamic, or Sharia, laws introduced in the majority Muslim northern States.

In Zamfara, separate schools for girls have been set up Sharia courts impose strict Islamic laws, including floggings and amputations for transgressions like theft for women, in his opinion, is a paramount example. Mr Eshkavari argued that the strict Islamic dress code for women should be optional. Secret trial This novel are not allowed to ride with men or compete against them. They have to wear strict Islamic clothing which some find a little tricky to control on horseback. “We have confiscated thousands of full-length black cloaks for women for violating strict Islamic law (Sharia), a Saudi newspaper has reported. Al-Jazirah said religious cosmetic surgery. At first it was Iranian women who wanted nose jobs because strict Islamic dress regulations meant the only thing peeking out was their face a

It follows a young Turkish woman in Hamburg trying to break away from her strict Muslim home.

vs. 17 : 17 : 0.55% ↓ in the Arab News

➢ Why can't different TV talk shows host a number of religious authorities speaking on how women in Islam are entitled to many more rights than our strict social structure gives them? (ANC 31809)
headscarf, wear, headscarves, veils, jilbab, wearing, burka

30.3% (n=175) of BBC articles about MW mention HIJAB in headline/by-line compared to 15.3% (n=105) in Arab News (LL 14.4; p<0.001).

HIJAB Query:

veil*|headscarf*|cover*|burqa*|burka*|ni?ab*|
h?jab*|jilbab*|chador*|abaya*

Result in the BBC: 2,207 : 625 : 19.1%
the sophistication of Tehran, where beautiful women are forced to wear headscarves and anoraks in public and look like supermodels masquerading as spies. (BBC 3902)
Negative predication (64 : 53 : 1.6%)

- “He (Straw) was expressing an important opinion which is that veils suck - which they do,” Mr [Salman] Rushdie told BBC radio. (BBC 3597)

Inappropriate/unwelcome (84 : 58 : 1.8%)

- Headscarves in particular, it is argued, cannot be tolerated in schools, because they are instruments of propaganda for an intolerant version of Islam and symbols of the oppression of women. (BBC 2550)
Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News
HIJAB (negative)

Impedes integration (61 : 43 : 1.3%)
Impedes communication (17 : 15 : 0.5%)
Not required in Islam (37 : 24 : 0.7%)
A threat to security (70 : 36 : 1.1%)
extremism and/or militancy (29 : 26 : 0.8%)
oppression of MW (31 : 24 : 0.7%)
conservatism (15 : 15 : 0.5%)
fundamentalism (11 : 9 : 0.3%)
MW oppose the HIJAB (52 : 33 : 1.0%)

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
Keywords: BBC vs. Arab News
HIJAB (positive)

Defending the right to wear it (112:69:2.1%)
An Islamic requirement (37:27:0.8%)
Chosen by MW (30:26:0.8%)
Benefits/normalcy (27:20:0.6%)
Essential part of identity (11:9:0.2%)
Non-Muslims saying it’s a non-issue (10:9:0.3%)
A religious act (15:6:0.2%)

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
MW in HIJAB mentioned or described in passing (139 : 121 : 3.7%)

- “Nothing happened to [Israeli Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon when Palestinian refugees were massacred,” said one women through a black veil which only revealed her eyes. (BBC 1183)

Relevance?
Key semantic categories: Arab News vs. BBC

- ISLAMIC RELIGION
- POSITIVES
- EDUCATION
- POLITICAL ACTORS
- BUSINESS
- GEOGRAPHY
- PRONOUNS
- GENDER & RELATIONSHIPS
- NEGATIVES
- DEONTIC MODALITY
- OTHER
Keywords: Arab News vs. BBC

PRONOUNS

our, we, their, my, them, I, these, us, those, ourselves, me

RQ: How much textual space are MW afforded in the text?
Keywords: Arab News vs. BBC

DEONTIC MODALITY

*must, need, should, needs*

1. Restriction modality
   - “They believe that women **must** be kept under the control of male guardians” (BBC)
   - “They **should** not mix with men and they **should** wear Islamic dress” (BBC)

2. Moral obligation modality
   - “Women **must** be allowed a far greater role in society” (Arab News)
   - “We **need to** start doing more to empower women in our society” (Arab News)
### Keywords: Arab News vs. BBC

#### DEONTIC MODALITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Restriction</th>
<th></th>
<th>Obligation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Arab News</td>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>Arab News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>should</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need to</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have to</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44 (1.35%)</td>
<td>39 (1.25%)</td>
<td>24 (0.73%)</td>
<td>176 (5.66%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not significant

LL = 125.6; p < .001

Covering MW in news discourse (Al-Hejin, 2010)
Summary of (other) findings so far...

1. WAR, CONFLICT and VIOLENCE dominate the contexts bringing MW into news discourse in both organisations but less so in Arab News.

2. At least one third of Arab News articles mentioning MW are written by women (BBC N/A).

3. MW reporting is mostly restricted in that 53% of the BBC and 82% of Arab News reporting relates to eight (out of 48) countries.

4. Arab News addresses other topics of concern to MW such as education, employment opportunities and business. The reporting is generally more positive.
5. WOMEN’S RIGHTS is a strong collocate of women in both corpora. Deontic modality patterns suggest Arab News has more to say about what ought to be done about restrictions MW face.

6. BBC seems to reflect a perspective that the restrictions MW face are attributable to their religion. Arab News seems more careful not to conflate culture and religion. Religious discourse is in fact employed as a vehicle for improving women’s rights.
Summary of (other) findings so far...

7. The HIJAB remains a focal point in the BBC’s reporting on MW.

8. Predication patterns of the HIJAB tend to be negative in the BBC. The veil is generally constructed as a “problem”. This inevitably has implications for MW who choose to wear it:
   - suffering from false consciousness
   - refusing to integrate into western societies
   - ignoring the communicational needs of others
   - flouting security procedures designed to prevent crime and terrorism
   - expressing aggression and militancy
   - endorsing fundamentalist values
   - going beyond the requirements of their own religion
   - performing a disservice to the cause of women’s rights
Thank you

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