

Middle East Dialogue 2015...Glorious Past, Uncertain Future

HOW THE WOMANSTATS DATABASE ADVANCES EMPIRICAL RESEARCH THAT REVEALS DISPARITIES IN SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN REGARDING THE SECURITY STATUS OF WOMEN AND ITS IMPACT ON REGIONAL SECURITY

Jason Anderson, American Military University

With continual expansion of the WomanStats Database, as well as the pursuit of a specific research agenda assessing the linkage between the security of women on the one hand, and the security, stability, and behavior of nation-states on the other, this resource has become one of the most expansive and authoritative research tools available to scholars, policymakers and international organizations by analyzing over 243 variables on the status of women for 172 nations.

It explores the relationship between the situation and security of women, on the one hand, and the security, stability, and behavior of the state on the other. More specifically regarding issues in the Middle East, it addresses such questions as:

- Is the degree to which a state is discrepant in its enforcement of laws protecting women related to the degree to which the state is non-compliant with international norms, treaties, and obligations?
- Is the degree of inequity in family law related to the stability of the state?
- Are states with prevalent polygyny also states of with higher levels of violence against women?
- Is the Islamic world monolithic in its treatment of women, or are there notable differences in the treatment of women, as measured by various indices? Is there a relationship within the Islamic world between the treatment of women within a state and the security, stability, and behavior of that state?

To address these questions, my research with WomanStats has scaled various aspects of women's experiences from the database, and has used those scales to create mappings of practices concerning women, as well as used these scales as inputs into more conventional statistical analyses.

For this presentation, I will exemplify the use of the database in looking at the practices of female trafficking, the prevalence of polygamy, and discrepancies between law and practice in the predominantly Islamic states of Saudi Arabia and Yemen and how this relates to the security of those nations.