

THE JYLLANDS-POSTEN PROPHET MUHAMMAD CARTOONS CONTROVERSY: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OR CLASHING OF STEREOTYPES?*

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Özet

Danimarka'nın Jyllands-Posten Gazetesi'nin Hz. Muhammed Karikatürleri Tartışması, pek çoğu hiç de hoş olmayan ve İslam Peygamberi Hz. Muhammed'i tasvir eden 12 karikatürün söz konusu gazetede yayımlanması ile başladı. Bununla beraber gazete, Hz. Muhammed karikatürlerini yayımlayarak İslam'ı eleştirme konusunda otosansür ve ifade özgürlüğü veya basın özgürlüğü adına yeni bir tartışma başlattıklarını iddia etti. Bu bakımdan Jyllands-Posten Gazetesi İslam Peygamberi'ni bir kez daha terörizm ile yan yana getirerek 'ötekiler'e karşı bir kez daha önyargıya neden oldu. Bu makalede, medya ürünlerindeki ırkçı stereotiplerin ideolojik önyargıları, Jyllands-Posten'in Hz. Muhammed Karikatürleri'nin göstergebilimsel ve izleyici analiziyle incelenmiştir. İzleyiciyi araştırma yöntemi olarak derinlemesine mülakat yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Mülakatlar, izleyicilerin karikatürlere reaksiyonlarını tanımlamak üzere Amerikalı, Avrupalı, Afrikalı ve Asyalı olmak üzere toplam 20 katılımcıyla yazar tarafından Mayıs, Haziran ve Temmuz 2006'da Mersin ve Adana'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatlara katılanların büyük bir kısmı Hz. Muhammed karikatürlerindeki ırkçı ve dini stereotiplerin saldırgan ve zararlı olduğunu açıklamıştır. Katılımcıların pek çoğu Hz. Muhammed'i terörist olarak tasvir eden karikatürlerin yayımlanmasının ifade özgürlüğü veya basın özgürlüğü ile açıklanamayacağına işaret ederek söz konusu durumun insan haklarına saldırı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Çalışmamız kapı tutucuların, haber toplama ve bildirme özgürlüğünün ırklar, cinsiyetler, gruplar, toplumlar, dinler ve daha pek çok alanda önyargılara neden olabileceğini onaylamaları gerektiğini önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İfade özgürlüğü, stereotipler, Jyllands-Posten.

Abstract: The Jyllands-Posten Prophet Muhammad Cartoons Controversy: Freedom Of Expression Or Clashing Of Stereotypes?

The Jyllands-Posten Prophet Muhammad Cartoons controversy began after twelve editorial cartoons, most of which distastefully depicted the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, were published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten on September 30, 2005. Although the newspaper claimed that, by publishing the Prophet Muhammad cartoons, they contributed to debate about self-censoring themselves from criticizing Islam, and to the freedom of speech or to the freedom of the press. In this respect, the newspaper caused a prejudice against 'others' by once again associating the Prophet with terrorism.

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In this article, the ideological prejudices of racial stereotypes in media outlets was examined through a semiotic analysis and audience analysis of The Jyllands-Posten prophet Muhammad cartoons. In-depth interviewing was used as a method of making research among the audience. These interviews were conducted by the author with totally 20 American, European, African and Asian respondents to identify the reaction of the audiences to the cartoons on May, June and July 2006 in Mersin and Adana. Majority of respondents of in-depth interviews stated that racial and religious stereotyping in the Prophet Muhammad Cartoons is offensive and harmful. Most of the respondents, at the same time, pointed out that publishing these cartoons can not be explained by the freedom of expression or freedom of the press and portraying a prophet as a terrorist can explicitly be regarded as an attack against human rights. Our study suggests that gate keepers should recognize that freedom of gathering and reporting information may cause prejudices against races, gender, groups, societies and religions.

Keywords: Freedom of speech, stereotypes, The Jyllands-Posten.

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INTRODUCTION

The Jyllands-Posten gained international attention after its controversial publication in September 2005 of 12 cartoons depicting Muslims and the prophet Muhammad. All 12 cartoons were published in a weekend supplement magazine of Jyllands-Posten on the same day. The most notorious one of these cartoons showed Muhammad with a bomb in his turban. This drew protests from Danish Muslims, soon followed by protests (including many violent ones) from throughout the Muslim world. Following discussions in Denmark, Jyllands-Posten published a series of interviews with Muslims and articles about Islam to show the other side of the story. This initiative failed to calm tensions.

By Muslim groups, the newspaper was accused of misusing the freedom of speech. The prophet Muhammad cartoons controversy resulted in withdrawal of the ambassadors of Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria from Denmark, as well as consumer boycotts of Danish products in a number of Islamic countries. The newspaper has apologized for offending Muslims, but carried on, at the same time, to claim its right to print the car-

toons, saying that Islamic fundamentalism cannot dictate what Danish newspapers are allowed or not allowed to print. The newspaper's two main offices have since been the subject of several bomb threats.

But Britain and US did not favor republishing of the cartoons. According to the State Department of America, it is unacceptable to incite religious hatred by publishing such pictures. After this statement, Foreign Minister of Great Britain, Jack Straw, called their publication was unnecessary, insensitive, disrespectful and wrong.

Double-standard of Jyllands-Posten

In April 2003, in an another edition of the newspaper, a set of unsolicited Jesus cartoons that were submitted by Christoffer Zieler were rejected to be published, on a ground that readers would not approve the cartoons and would in fact provoke an outcry. The Muhammed cartoons, however, were exploited for a specific story about self-censorship that has sprung up out of fear of Muslim extremists, after the author of a Children's book about Muhammad had to use an anonymous illustrator. Ahmed Akkari, spokesman for the Danish-based Euro-

pean Committee for Prophet Honouring, regards this as a double-standard (The Akkari-Laban Dossier, 2005).

Definition Of Stereotype

Prejudice may be defined as “a negative and partial attitude that prevents objective evaluation, aimed against an entire category of people, often an ethnic or racial minority. In this sense, reporting of any kind of case, should, naturally, be free of something “prejudged”. That is why; there is a prominent relationship between prejudice and stereotypes. The term stereotype was formulated by Walter Lippmann, in the early 1920s. He described the term as “the picture (of the world) that a person has in his/her head” (Lippman, 1961, p. 53-65). Stereotypes are unreliable generalizations about all members of a group which do not recognize individual differences within the group. The term is generally applied to human beings, but it is quite possible to stereotype objects as well. In popular culture, both types of stereotypes are used. People are stereotyped around characteristic of age, sex, race, religion, vocation and nationality. Objects can be stereotyped around characteristics of places such as; ‘Small towns are safe and clean’, ‘In England, it rains all the time’, and things like ‘A good house has a large lawn, big garage, and at least two bathrooms’.

Stereotyping of humans, on the other hand, forms a conception of a few simple and widely accepted conventional characteristics related to a person or a group of people. It both reduces and excludes some information, or exaggerates some characteristics of persons or groups of people to simplify the general image. Stuart Hall denotes that stereotyping means reducing, naturalizing and pegging the differences. Stereotyping creates simple social categories, such as;

what is normal and what is abnormal, who are we and who are they (Hall, 1997, pp. 223-290). According to psychoanalyst Jacques Lacans, the term ‘the others’ are basically anyone who is being thought as different from your self. Amongst post-colonial theories and other racial ideologies, the term “the others’ legitimated colonial powers’ right to occupy a land, turn people in to slaves and steal from the inhabitants by creating an image (stereotypes) of the others as barbarians and uncivilized animals as a contrast to the civilized and highly developed Europe.

There are five main principles or techniques of stereotyping (Akram, Markova & Others, 2006):

1. The most important and powerful technique is transforming the individual into generic. This begins from a certain individual case (news, report, and incident) to produce a characteristic, applicable to every member of the group in question.
2. Accumulating quantity around a given notion; the result is accepting this notion as something ‘particular’ to the group.
3. Labeling. This means directly combining the name of the group with a qualitative evaluation (often in the form of offensive language, known as hate speech). Artificial group identification makes up further formal logic rules along with it, such as: ‘Arabs are terrorists’ means that all Arabs are terrorists.
4. Using the past in an attempt to suggest a long-lasting or everlasting characteristic (‘They’ are and will be such as ‘they’ have always been.)
5. Equating the image of the group to the image of the state (Of course, this technique works only in cases where the state is relevant: it is inapplicable in the

case of ethnic groups like Roma or religious groups like the Roman Catholics).

Semiological Analysis Of Prophet Muhammad Cartoons

Arthur Asa Berger offers an analogy that might be useful here. Berger says that "When you act as a "practicing semiotician", think yourself like Sherlock Holmes or some other detective who is investigating a crime. The detective looks for clues, and for him, everything is potentially significant. Remember what Pierce said: "The universe is perfused with signs, if not made up entirely of them" (quoted in Zeman, 1977)". According to the Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman, every aspect of an art work is important (Berger, 2005, pp. 134-135, 166). Taking this notion as a departure point and considering different semiotics signs found in the cartoons, in this part of our study, prophet Muhammad cartoons will be analyzed in detail.

Cartoon is a sketch or drawing that attracts attention of or amuses people by portraying persons, things, political events or situations etc. in an exaggerated way. Three of the 12 prophet Muhammad cartoons that were published in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten on September 30, 2005, were black and white and the rest were colored. In all the Cartoons, facial characteristics have been exaggerated by cartoonists. Faces of characters convey messages of anger and hatred. All characters had very big and ugly mouths, huge hooked noses, black small eyes, thick eyebrows and bushy beard.

Below, we list and briefly discuss different semiotic signs that can be found in the cartoons. Several misconceptions about Islam are due to wrong beliefs and actions of Mus-

lims, and others are due to a significant lack of understanding and false stereotyping by the media. The prejudice against Islam also involves the misconception of Islam as a violent religion that is against freedom or democracy. The Quran is a book containing the literal Words of Allah. The Quran claims that it is protected from being changed by others than Allah, and this is confirmed by its 1400 year history of unalteredness. The earliest copies and the latest copies of the Quran are the same. The sunnah is the term used to describe how the prophet Muhammad lived his life. His life is an example for all Muslims or those who accept Islam, to follow. The Quran and sunnah are the only two mediums by which Allah has directly taught mankind about Islam. Islam is a way of life which is very firmly based on a scholarly approach, an approach which is based on knowledge (Bukhari, bk.55, no. 570).

List of important nonverbal signs of the twelve cartoons:

1. The Crescent and the Star

The green crescent (hilar) and the star are symbolizing Islam. In the common history of civilization, the star and crescent signifies concentration, openness and victor, as well as sovereignty and divinity. According to a tradition, in 339 BC a brilliant waxing moon saves Byzantium (now Istanbul) from the attack of Philip of Macedon. To mark their gratitude, citizens adopted the Crescent of Diana as the city's emblem. When the city became Christian Constantinople in 330 AD, its crescent assumed the significance of an attribute of the Virgin Mary. In 1299, conquering what is now Turkey, Sultan Osman had a vision of a crescent moon stretching over the world; it thus became a symbol of the Ottoman dynasty, and when Constantinople fell to Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, the crescent came to represent both Islam and

the Turkish Empire. Muslims all around the world started using crescent after 1453. The star was added by Sultan Selim III in 1793 (Gibson, 1996: 42).

2. Colors (Green and Black)

The green color has been associated with Islam for many centuries. Green is thought to be one of the Islamic symbols. But it is not clear why this is so. Some say green was prophet Muhammad's favorite color and that he wore a green cloak and turban. Others believe that it symbolizes nature and life. In the Quran (18:31), it is said that the inhabitants of paradise will wear green garments of fine silk.

Black is often worn by Shi'a Muslims, who mourn the death of Husayn ibn Ali, killed at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. It is the color of chador worn by devout Iranian Shi'a women and the cloaks worn by the Shi'a mullahs (Bogle, 1998: 85)

3. Clothes (chador)

The wearing of the chador by women is an illogical premise to claim that the women who believe in Islam have to wear chador. There is no explanation of chador in the Quran. Chador is an unislamic garment. It is a traditional Iranian garment (most of the immigrants are Persian in Denmark), mostly worn by practicing Muslim women in urban or rural Iran. The way of wearing for women is described in the Quran as follows:

(33:59) O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not be annoyed.

(24:30-31) Say to believing man that they should lower their gaze and guard their

modesty; that will make for greater purity for them; and Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty, and that they should not display their beauty and ornaments excepts what must ordinarily appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands.

4. Exaggeration of facial characteristics & expression (huge hooked nose, small black eyes, curly black hair and bushy beard & anger, hate)

Facial characteristics and facial expression of all characters who symbolize prophet Muhammad clearly remind terrorists. Especially the prophet Muhammad character depicted on Cartoon 6 and the terrorist Osama Bin Laden are very similar in appearance, facial characteristics and clothes.

5. Halo and a pair of horns

The halo is an object of religious iconography in both Christian and Buddhist traditions. The halo appears in the art of ancient Greece and Rome, and was incorporated into Christian art. Round halos are used to signify saints. A cross within a halo is used to represent Jesus. Triangular halos are used for representations of the trinity (Sill, 1975: 57). The character of Cartoon 3 has glowing crescent around his turban suggests both a halo and a pair of horns. As an international sign, carrying a pair of horns symbolizes evil (Noble, 1994: 16).

6. Bomb

After 9/11 terrorist attack, global media started to use 'terrorism' and 'Islam' in the same phrase. Religious terror is the same with other types of terror caused by extreme tendencies of like patriotism, state-spon-

sored terrorism, racism, narcoterrorism, anarchism, political drives, eco-terrorism, or agro-terrorism. Bombing, on the other hand, is one of the terror tactics like assassination, IED (bomb), car bombing, suicide bombing, kidnapping, bioterrorism, nuclear terrorism, and cyber-terrorism (Hoffman, 2006: 55). In this sense, prophet Muhammad drawn with a bomb in his turban (Cartoon 2) symbolizes terrorism.

8. Sword

The sword is used twice in the cartoons (Cartoon 7 and Cartoon 9). The sword can symbolize violence, combat or military intervention. One of the misconceptions about Islam is that "Islam was spreaded by the sword". Allah has stated clearly in the Quran that;

(2:256) There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever rejects Satan (and what he calls to) and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handhold, which shall not break off, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Again it's important to remember that Allah declares it impossible that Islam can be imposed by force on a person.

Zulfiqar

Shi'a Muslims believe that prophet Muhammad carried a sword called Zulfiqar, which he gave to his son-in-law and cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib. Ali is believed to have been a prodigious warrior who performed miracles of valor with this sword. Hence, Zulfiqar symbolizes both his inheritance of power and authority from the prophet Muhammad (at least in Shi'a eyes) and his great bravery (Akbar, 2003: 67-69).

9. Suicide bombers

The vast majority of mainstream Islamic judicial opinion completely rejects suicide for any reason. According to the Quran, "Suicide bombers" are unacceptable people, let alone can be regarded as martyrs. It is Islamically unlawful to murder anyone who is innocent of certain crimes. Hence, if any Muslim kills an innocent person, that Muslim has committed a grave sin, and certainly the action cannot be claimed to have been done "in the name of Islam".

The Quran says, (17:33) Any one who has saved one life, (it is as if he) has saved the whole mankind, and any one who has killed a human being, except in case of murderer or mischief on earth, (it is as if he) has killed the whole mankind.

10. Race (Arab or Middle Easterner)

People in the west frequently equate Arab with Muslim and use the words interchangeably. While this misconception honors the tremendous contribution of Arabs to Islam, it indicates the general ignorance of Islam in the West. ten percent of the world's Arabs are Christian. Eighteen percent of Muslims around the world are Arab. The most populous Muslim country in the world is Indonesia. The second most populous Muslim country is Bangladesh. Neither of these countries belongs to any Arabic origin. In the time of Muhammad, the ancestors of most modern Arabs were Greeks, Egyptians, Phoenicians or other Mediterraneans. They or their offspring adopted the Arabic language and much of the Arabic culture, and many adopted Islam to become Arabic-speaking Muslims, in much the same way that people from all over the world migrated to North America and became English-speaking Americans (Bogle, 1998: 47).

11. Blond man character

The blond man character who stands up in front of the police line-up (Cartoon 12) symbolizes Western civilizations and dominant culture. The other side of police line-up symbolizes Eastern civilizations and subcultures. In sociology, anthropology and cultural studies, a subculture is a set of people with distinct sets of behavior and beliefs that differentiate them from a larger culture of which they are a part. The subculture may be distinctive because of the age of its members, or by their race, ethnicity, class and/or gender, and the qualities that determine a subculture as distinct may be aesthetic, religious, occupational, political, and sexual or a combination of these factors. A majority which passively accepted commercially provided styles and meanings, and a subculture which actively sought a minority style and interpreted it in accordance with subversive values. In other words, subcultures are groups of individuals who, through a variety of methods, present themselves in opposition to the mainstream trends of their culture. If the subculture is characterized by a systematic opposition to the dominant culture, then it may be described as a counter-culture (Riesman & others, 1950: 45-48)

Style is defined as fashions, mannerisms, and argot. Therefore, the study of subculture often consists of the study of the symbolism attached to these affectations by members of the subculture, and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. Their specific attributes immensely vary (Hebidge, 1981: 38).

Most important verbal sign of twelve cartoons:

"Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins!" (Cartoon 10)

Due to the Islamic strictures against suicide, it began to be applied to suicide bombers by terrorist groups. There is a huge controversy about the meaning of jihad in Islam, since messenger prophet Muhammad never claimed that suicide is equal to jihad. Jihad, meaning "to struggle", is rooted in the Quran's command to "struggle or exert" oneself in the path of God. It primarily means the obligation of all Muslims, individuals and the community, to do God's will: to lead a virtuous life, struggle against the evil in oneself, make a serious effort to good works and help to reform society. Depending on the circumstances in which one lives, jihad can also mean fighting in justice and oppression, creating a just society through preaching and teaching and, if necessary, engaging in armed struggle to defend one's community and religion. These multiple meanings continue to exist across the Muslim world (Esposito&Mogahed,2007: 33). Islamic Law or Shari'a is composed of the Quran and the Sunna. Prophet Muhammad's Sunna is made up of his hadith. Hadith are authenticated accounts of comments and behavior of the prophet Muhammad, which serve as the principal supplement to the Quran as the guide to Islamic law (shari'a) and proper behavior for Sunni Muslims (Bogle, 1998: 133).

The Quran unconditionally bans suicide, even as a tactic in a legitimate holy war. Attacking innocent, unarmed people is forbidden. Prophet Muhammad demanded that we not kill women, children or the elderly. Attacks should be against soldiers and armed civilians (Newsweek, 2001, p.21). Quran (4.29) says: "And do not kill your-

selves (nor kill one another). Surely, Allah is Most Merciful to you”.

According to the Quran (55.56), the houri are pure; having never been touched by man or jinn and so they are virgins who marry the devout in the Jannah, the paradise, of the afterlife. There is no 72 virgins promise in the Quran.

RESEARCHING THE AUDIENCE

Method

In-depth interviews have been conducted with American, European, African and Asian respondents. To identify the response of audience to the media portrayal of a race beyond their surface attitudes and in mapping out a subtle picture of audience reaction, several studies have demonstrated the strength of focus groups and in-depth interviews (Bird 1996, 2003; Bobo, 1989, 1995; Jhally & Lewis, 1992). Each one of these interviews was conducted with a single respondent. Hence altogether 20 respondents from origins of America, Europe, Africa and Asia were individually interviewed. Because of interviewing individually, all respondents felt comfortable during discussing the potentially sensitive topics, such as racism. Nationality and gender pattern of the 20 volunteers who were interviewed are as follows: 5 American (3 males, 2 females), 7 European (3 males, 4 females), 2 Africans (1 male, 1 female) and 6 Asians (4 males, 2 females). Age ranges were as follows: American respondents were between 21 and 35 (mean 26.6 years), European respondents were between 21 and 40 (mean 25.8 years), African respondents were between 18 and 25 (mean 21.5 years), and Asian respondents were between 18 and 22 (mean 19.5 years) years of age. Most of the participants were selected from undergraduate students who came to Turkey through Foreign Student

Program and Student Exchange Program of Erasmus. Two American participants and two European participants had a graduate degree.

The respondents and the researcher came together either in the interviewer's office or in a classroom. They saw prophet Muhammad cartoons together and then, the interviewer facilitated a discussion about their views on the cartoons including some questions asked about their opinions on the characters, what they thought about the stereotypes depicted in the cartoons and whether they were offended by this, or not. Semi structured discussions were held in a relaxed and informal atmosphere so that much of the shared information emerged from the natural flow of the conversation. Each discussion lasted about 45-60 minutes. All discussions were tape recorded and transcribed. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Perceptions of stereotypes are important during analyzing the data attained from the semi structured discussions. In media theory, serious under-representation of a particular group has been coined into “symbolic annihilation” (Gerbner&Gross, 1976; Tuchman, Daniels&Benet, 1978). Symbolic annihilation refers to the most profound inequities in “the spectrum of mediated representations of a social group” (Kielwasser&Wolf, 1992: 351).

Offensiveness

Irrespective of race, in-depth interview respondents explicitly did not laugh at the cartoons of prophet Muhammad which were published on The Jyllands-Posten. They did not show any feeling of pleasure or enjoyment about these cartoons. 17 of 20 respondents described cartoons as offensive. 18 of

20 respondents saw the cartoons first time. Two respondents stated that they saw only the cartoon showing prophet Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban with a burning fuse on top and the Islamic creed (shahada) written on the bomb (Cartoon 2). 15 of 20 respondents noticed that conveying ways of stereotypes are not enough to reduce the degree of offensiveness. Sibylla (European female, 21) stated that the cartoons worse than she thought and the context of putting the whole interaction with the humor was not enough to reduce degree of offensiveness. Several respondents agreed that cartoons had racial prejudice or racial hatred. Jeffrey (American male, 33) said:

“Media outputs should be respectful about race, religion, language and something like that. Mass media shouldn’t produce any generalizations about all members of a group. It is not fair. Cartoons have racial prejudice or racial hatred. On the other hand, publishing the cartoons in the name of press freedom was wrong behavior of media. Believe or don’t believe, love or don’t love, that is the reality Muhammad is the prophet of Muslims. My country’s approach to the cartoon controversy was peacefully. US didn’t receive to publish cartoons favorably”.

Stereotypes

Although not offended by the prophet Muhammad cartoons, European and American respondents made reference to the stereotypes expressed in the cartoons, including Muslims who believed in the prophet Muhammad, are skilled in martial arts and terrorism; Muslims are evil; Muslims women are kept under yoke; second-generation children of Muslim immigrants are potential terrorism threat for European countries in the future; Muhammad is the prophet of

violence, autocracy, obstinacy, hatred and fanaticism.

Muhammad is the prophet of violence and Islam means violence to the women

All respondents explicitly stated that despite knowing the portrait of Jesus, Buddha; they didn’t see portrait of prophet Muhammad before. Majority of respondents gave numerous reasons for why Muslims and prophet Muhammad are associated with the martial arts and terrorism. Many respondents in all four racial groups said that the prophet Muhammad character depicted on Cartoon 6 and the terrorist Osama Bin Laden are very similar in appearance, facial characteristics and clothes. Sarah (European female, 22) said, “Islam is a religion that symbolizes terrorism. Muslims don’t hesitate being suicide bombers. Muhammad is the prophet of violence, autocracy, obstinacy, hate and fanaticism. Additionally, Muslim women are under a yoke”.

Second-generation of Muslim immigrants are potential terrorism threat for European countries in the future

Another respondent Marianna (European female, 23) found cartoons unfair. She criticized the European media and said:

“European media stereotypes of the Arab world that seem to be greater and more dangerous than they have been for decades. It was so difficult to persuade my family for studying in Turkey since here is an Islamic country. The cartoon controversy approximately was at the same time with my travel. My boyfriend’s name is Muhammad, I love him and he is not a terrorist. Media must avoid the labels. Second-generation of Muslim immigrants are perceived as potential terrorism threat for European countries in the future”.

As Jhally and Lewis (1992) note, fictional media are simultaneously real and unreal and therefore have a significant impact on how we perceive the social world. Pictorial stereotypes often become misinformed perceptions that have the weight of established facts. These pictures can remain in a person's mind through a lifetime (Lester, 2006). Respondents gave similar answers about characters' race. According to the respondents, the characters that were portrayed in the prophet Muhammad cartoons are from Middle Eastern origin or every other races who believe in the prophet Muhammad. Additionally, Muslim men are so ugly, vulgar and combatant.

Muslims are the terrorist: Suicide bombers will be awarded with seventy two virgins

For Asian and African respondents, East part of the world, including Islamic countries, are misrepresented in the international media. Hence cartoon controversy must be perceived as a sign of this progress. The respondents recognized many racial stereotypes in the cartoons. Asian and African respondents, however, have been very upset with the cartoons. During in-depth interviews, some of them asked permission to smoke a cigarette in distress. They perceived and accepted many of the racial portrayals as unreal, because these negative portrayals are based on unrealistic international media discourse. They described Cartoon 10 as "the biggest disinformation" that is conveyed by the cartoons. They said, "In Quran, you can not find any word which promised suicide bombers, seventy two virgins. According to the Quran, committing suicide is a big sin. That kind of people include terrorists who kill innocent people will not be able to feel even the smell of heaven".

Asian respondent Roushan (Asian male, 22) stated that prophet Muhammad, not only preached to the people to show kindness to each other but also to all living souls. He said:

"As prophet Muhammad's army marched towards Makkah to conquer it, they passed a female dog with puppies. The prophet not only gave orders that they should not be disturbed, but posted a man too see that this was done. He stated, "Verily, there is heavenly reward for every act of kindness done to a living animal".

Majority of respondents described cartoons as attack to human rights. The most important stereotype depicted here, is that Muslims are terrorists.

Asian and African respondents of in-dept interview were offended by the prophet Muhammad cartoons. 15 of 20 respondents of in-depth interview claimed that racial and religious stereotyping in the prophet Muhammad cartoons is offensive and harmful. Racial stereotypes in humor are normally presented in an enjoyable and pleasurable way. But no respondent showed any enjoyment about these cartoons. Our study suggests that gate keepers should recognize that freedom of gathering and reporting information may cause prejudices against races, gender, groups, societies or religions. Extreme use of freedom of speech may sometimes cause harm or discomfort for others.

RESULTS

A cartoon, although packed within a deceptively simple frame, is actually a complex exercise in semiotic communication. In the print or the screen media, no other form of art combines words, pictures, and meaning in such an interwoven way. Like motion

pictures and television images create certain effects, cartoons also form effective and complex intellectual and emotional combination of texts and images in a highly particular way.

Second-generation children of Muslim immigrants and Denmark

Due to its powerful communication ability, corporate advertisers, governments, and instructional aid companies are using cartoon art as a strong means of propaganda. Cartoons introduce generations of readers to symbolic ways of addressing the continuing problems of their society and the philosophic questions of mankind (Inge,1990:83). The prophet Muhammad cartoons, on the other hand, address the continuing problems of Denmark: The phobic fear of terrorism. Semiotic analyzes of the prophet Muhammad cartoons exhibits us that cartoonists have actually reflected the approach of the Danish Government towards the problem of immigrants. According to the Danish media, three out of four Danes believe that an attack on their country by Islamic extremists is likely or very likely in the near future. Since the London attacks, the focus has shifted away from external threats to Danish-born Muslims who feel marginalized by the society (Scandinavian, 2005: 18). As we have seen in Cartoon 3.8, the boy who is labelled "Mohammed, Valby school, 7.A", was implying that he is the second-generation child of immigrants who settled in Denmark. On his shirt was written "FREM" and then in a new line "-TIDEN". Fremtiden means the future, but Frem (forward) is also the name of a Valby football team whose uniforms resemble the boy's shirt. Ironically, the cartoonist Lars Refn, who drew this particular cartoon, was the first to receive death threats and left his home in Valby.

More than 400 000 of Denmark's 5.4 million inhabitants are immigrants. About 150 000 are Muslims, amounting to 3 percent of the whole population. This still makes them the second-largest religious group in the country after the Lutheran-Evangelical Church, the Supreme Governor of which is the Queen herself and the 85 percent of the population to which belongs.

In the authorized biography entitled Margrethe, written by the journalist Annelise Bistrup, the Danish Queen voiced her disapproval of "these people for whom religion is their entire life". Queen Margrethe says that: "We have to run the risk of being labeled in an unflattering way, because there are some things for which we should display no tolerance" (Scandinavian, 2005: 18). This is one of the reason why Muslims have been stereotyped as simply terrorists in these cartoons.

Ethical perspective

Critics most often refer to four main ethical problems related to cartoons: Marketing cartoon characters to children, using too few multicultural characters, introducing political opinions in comic strips, and showing inappropriate sexual and violent themes. When cartoons rely on stereotypes for their humor, they often ensue controversies like one caused by The Jyllands-Posten prophet Muhammad cartoons.

One of the chief functions of the brain is to categorize visual information into basic units so that they can easily and quickly be analyzed. Selectivity is a process by which the mind decides which objects are important, which objects are insignificant, which are helpful, and yet which are harmful. Unfortunately, this trait of the brain also leads to an instant categorization of people. Noticing a person's gender, age, ethnic background,

and the like is perfectly natural. But preconceived attitudes or opinions that may or may not be true about that person are learned through enculturation (Lester, 2006: 94).

Stereotypes can be reinforced with images. Whether an individual is identified because of his/her gender, age, cultural heritage, economic status, sexual orientation, or physical disability, the instant visual message generally communicated about this person is often misleading and false. This is because, emotionally, pictures affect a viewer more than words alone do. Pictorial stereotypes often become misinformed perceptions that have the weight of established facts. These pictures can remain in a person's mind throughout a lifetime, and this is why a group of people with particular characteristics are thought to have their own way life which never changes; this is a phenomenon that deserves special attention. Also, the sign language reminds us of a virus. If it is not killed (or substituted) by another sign, it is capable of surviving years and years in hibernation- years with no coverage of the group. This sign may be used even long after the characteristic's strands have died away. The sign may enter films, art, cartoons, creative literature and be fossilized as ready to be revived in the future (Lester, 2006: 228).

During the in-depth interviews, despite being not offended by the prophet Muhammad cartoons, references made by the European and American respondents related to the stereotypes expressed in the cartoons, include: Muslims who believed in prophet Muhammad are skilled in martial arts and terrorism; Muslims are evil; Muslim women are kept under yoke; second-generation of Muslim immigrants are potential terrorism threat for European countries in the future;

Muhammad is the prophet of violence, autocracy, obstinacy, hatred and fanaticism. Majority of respondents of in-depth interviews stated that racial and religious stereotyping in the prophet Muhammad cartoons is offensive and harmful. Most of the respondents, at the same time, pointed out that publishing these cartoons can not be explained by the freedom of expression or freedom of the press and portraying a prophet as a terrorist can explicitly be regarded as an attack against human rights.

The Jyllands-Posten and its cartoonists, who produced the prophet Muhammad cartoons, could not perform any control over their own creation. Stereotypes and signs that are emerged by the prophet Muhammad cartoons will survive years and years in hibernation since they already entered the media outputs and they will be fossilized, ready to be revived in the future.

The cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad which were originally published on 30 September 2005 by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, have later been republished by several media organizations, both in Europe and around the world. Publication of the prophet Muhammad cartoons deeply hurt moral and religious feelings of Muslims. This type of act does not comply with the responsibility of the press. The impact of this offense has been very widespread, and was, often violently, protested by Muslims. Since then, more than ten Muslims have been killed.

The pressure on the media has also been severe. Staff at the Jyllands-Posten received threats, while the original cartoonists are now in hiding under the protection of the Danish police. In Western societies, some editors were dismissed for reprinting the

cartoons, and others have come under intense pressure to apologize, while editors in the Muslim world have been fired, detained, arrested or their publications have been withdrawn. On the other hand, *Le Monde* seriously interviewed the cartoonists who portrayed prophet Muhammad as terrorist, some of whom spoke quite interestingly, like: "I always knew this was a provocative act by our newspaper" said one (Owen, 2006: 17-18).

At the international level, there are already legal protections for freedom of the press and religion. The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted in 1966 by the United Nations, sets out legal provisions safeguarding not only freedom of the press (Article 19), but also religion (Article 18). However, there are important limitations on these rights (Callamard, 2006: 10).

Furthermore, the ICCPR contains restrictions, for example, Article 20, paragraph 2, which states, "Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law." IPI (International Press Institute) Director Johann P. Fritz (2006) stated that:

"a causal link between hate speech and a criminal act of violence that can be proven. We must recognize the editor's fundamental right to decide upon the content, but this right entails responsibility and respect for the internationally defined limitations on freedom of the press. Editors, wherever they stand - local, national or international - must nowadays have global horizons".

The cartoon controversy, has also led some representatives at the national and European levels to call for additional self-regulatory

codes, which infringes the media's independence.

Media organizations in Europe are already involved in a network of voluntary self-regulatory methods, including national press councils, ombudsmen, and codes of conduct, among others, all of which provide accountability and governance on a variety of ethical issues. Fresh calls for voluntary codes of conduct reveal a failure to appreciate the work already undertaken by the media in this area, as well as a misunderstanding of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which already contains numerous limitations on freedom of the press.

Media should reflect an awareness of the religious sensitivity of references to, or uses of, names, images, the historic deities, rituals, scriptures and language at the heart of the different faiths and ensure that any use of, or verbal or visual reference to them are treated with care and editorially justified. Similarly, in Europe many countries still have punitive laws on blasphemy and there are places where you can be prosecuted for wearing Nazi insignia. As the historian David Irving discovered in Vienna earlier this year, there are also countries where you can go to prison for denying the Holocaust (Israel, Austria, Belgium, The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland). But no wonder why some Muslims were confused when their complaints over the cartoons have been dismissed as an attack on European ideals of freedom of expression (Cooper and Brackman, 2006: 23-24).

There are many ways in which media can make contribution towards fighting against intolerance. The list below is based on the 2001 Joint Statement on Racism and Media

held by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OAS Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression (Callamard, 2006: 11).

- Designing and delivering media training programs which promote a better understanding of issues relating to racism and discrimination, and which foster a sense of moral and social obligations of the media to promote tolerance and knowledge of practical means by which this may be done;
- Ensuring that effective ethical and self-regulatory codes of conduct that prohibit the use of prejudicial or derogatory stereotypes, unnecessary references to race, religion and related attributes;
- Taking measures to ensure that their work force is diverse and reasonably representative of the society as a whole;
- Taking care to report factually and in a sensitive manner on acts of racism or discrimination, while at the same time ensuring that they are brought to the attention of the public;
- Ensuring that reporting in relation to specific communities promotes a better understanding of difference and at the same time reflects the perspectives of those communities and gives members of those communities a chance to be heard;
- Ensuring that a number of voices within communities are heard rather than representing

communities as monolithic bloc-communities themselves may practice censorship;

- Promoting a culture of tolerance and a better understanding of the evils of racism and discrimination.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the media need to improve their performance and journalists need to rebuild confidence in the notion that media should speak for everyone, not just for the settled majority. Regulating ethics must be regarded as the collective business of journalists.

Many contemporary journalists find that objectivity is an unrealistic requirement for journalists, they prefer instead, definitions like 'fairness', 'balance', 'accuracy', 'comprehensiveness' and 'truth'. In terms of presenting the viewpoints, journalists are taught to abide by the norm of balance: identifying the most dominant and widespread positions, and then reporting 'both' sides of the story. This is why balance, fairness, comprehensiveness and consistency are regarded as the most important codes of ethical journalism.

A fair balance between respecting human values and the freedom of expression must be established. In order to refrain from causing the world to separate into two parts as 'the others' and 'us', all countries media should predefine their ethical codes again. When media is taken out of the hands of professionals, it can become a real weapon of mass destruction.

In his paper which was published in the periodical Foreign Affairs, Samuel P. Huntington claimed that the next world war, if it

will happen, will be a war between civilizations, a hypothesis claimed by Huntington which is known as The Clash of Civilizations. According to Huntington, civilizations -the highest cultural groupings of people- are differentiated from each other by religion, history, language and tradition. These divisions are deep and have an increasing importance. From Yugoslavia to the Middle East and to Central Asia, the fault lines of civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. What is more, Confucian and Islamic states pose threat against western civilizations (Huntington, 1993: 22-28). To an extent, Huntington was right from one point of view. Yes, there is something crashing, but that sound is coming from the clash of stereotypes produced by the media, not from clashes of civilizations.

Additionally, there is not a real portrait of prophet Muhammad. Painting of his portrait was forbidden by himself. Prophet Muhammad brought the message of Islam to pagan Arabs. That's the reason why not only prophet Muhammad but also Islamic law or Shari'a prohibits depictions of the prophet because they encourage idol worship and go against the principles of Islam. Prophet Muhammad's challenge to idol worship was an important part of the new message of Islam which focused on the oneness of Allah. On the usage of pictures, the hadith is also abundantly clear. The narration by Ibn Abbas follows: "The Prophet entered the Ka'ba and found in it the pictures of (Prophet) Abraham and Mary. On that he said "What is the matter with them (i.e. Quraish)? They have already heard that angels do not enter a house in which there are pictures; yet this is the picture of Abraham. And why is he depicted as practicing divination by arrows?" (Bukhari, bk.59, no. 583).

Moreover, the Ibn Abbas narration continues "When the Prophet saw pictures in the Ka'ba, he did not enter it till he ordered them to be erased. When he saw (the pictures of Abraham and Ishmael carrying the arrows of divination, he said, 'May Allah curse them (i.e. Quraish)! By Allah, neither Abraham nor Ishmael practiced divination by arrows" (Bukhari, bk.55, no. 570).

APPENDIX

Descriptions of prophet Muhammad cartoons*

Cartoon 1

The Islamic star and crescent merged from the so called face of prophet Muhammad; his right eye is the star, the crescent surrounds his beard and face. Since there is no portrait of the prophet Muhammad, it is not possible to name the character without seeing the verbal signs of page. He is wearing a turban, a head covering worn by Muslim, Hindu or Sikh men. Turban consists of a long piece of cloth round his head.

Cartoon 2

Prophet Muhammad is wearing a bomb-shaped turban with a burning fuse on top, the Islamic creed shahada written on the bomb. A Muslim expresses his/her faith (Iman) in the following words: "Ash-hadu an- la ilaha illallahu, Wahdahu, la Sharika Lahu, wa-ash-hadu anna Muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu". The English translation of the Shahadah is as follows: "I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, the One, without any partner. And I bear witness that prophet Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger". Since there is no portrait of the prophet Muhammad, again it is not possible to name the character without seeing the verbal signs of the page.

Cartoon 3

Character is wearing a salwar kameez, turban and slippers. A glowing crescent around his turban suggests both a halo and a pair of horns. Character is standing up insidiously.

Cartoon 4

A schematic stick drawing of five almost identical figures. Each of them resembles a headscarf seen from the side and has a Star of David and a crescent where the face should be. A poem on oppression of women is attached to the cartoon: "Profet! Med kuk og knald i låget som holder kvinder under åget!", which could be translated as: "Prophet, you crazy bloke! Keeping women under yoke!"

Cartoon 5

Prophet Muhammad is with a walking stick. He is on a desert trek, with the sun on the left, low on the horizon. There is a donkey or mule in the background, carrying a burden. The dark looking character is wearing a white shirt and trousers, red turban, slippers.

Cartoon 6

A nervous caricaturist at work, sweating profusely, looks over his shoulder and partially hides what he's doing with his left arm as he shakily draws the portrait of a bearded keffiyeh-wearing man, labeled "MOHAMMED". There is but one light in the room he is in and it only shines from directly above his head illuminating only the drawing he is working on. Only the face of the character is visible.

Cartoon 7

Two angry Muslims charge forward one holding a scimitar, the other holding a bomb and possibly carrying a rifle or scimitar on his back, while their leader (presumably

prophet Muhammad) addresses them with: "Rolig, venner, når alt kommer til alt er det jo bare en tegning lavet af en vantro sønderjyde", referring to a drawing in his hand. In English, his words are: "Relax, friends, at the end of the day, it's just a drawing by a "South Jutlander" infidel". These three characters are in an oriental palace and wearing turban, caftan and slippers.

Cartoon 8

A 7th grade Middle-Eastern looking boy in front of a blackboard. Sticking out his tongue, he points to a Farsi passage written on the board with chalk, which translates into "The editorial team of Jyllands-Posten is a bunch of reactionary provocateurs". The boy is labelled "Mohammed, Valby school, 7.A", implying that he is a second-generation child of immigrants to Denmark. On his shirt is written "FREM" and then in a new line "-TIDEN". Fremtiden means the future, but Frem (forward) is also the name of a Valby football team whose uniforms resemble the boy's shirt. Ironically, the cartoonist Lars Refn, who drew this particular cartoon was the first to receive death threats and left his home in Valby. The character is approximately 13-14 years old. He is wearing sports outfits.

Cartoon 9

Prophet Muhammad wearing an imamah (turban) and prepared for battle, with a sword in his hand and likely a scimitar tucked in a shoulder strap scabbard behind him. He is flanked by two women in chador, having only their wide open eyes visible through band shaped eye openings while an equivalently sized band shaped black bar censors his eyes as though it was cut from one of the chador. His face is quite obscured by a thick grey beard and bushy eyebrows.

His dress consists of white shirt, a brown sheet on the left shoulder and white turban.

Cartoon 10

Prophet Muhammad, dressed like a mullah, stands on a cloud as if in Heaven, greeting freshly arrived dead suicide bombers with "Stop Stop vi er løbet tør for Jomfruer!" Translated in English: "Stop, stop, we have run out of virgins!" an allusion to the reward of seventy two virgins (houris) promised to Islamic martyrs.

Cartoon 11

A caricatured version of journalist Kåre Bluitgen, is wearing a turban with the proverbial orange dropping into it, with the inscription "Publicity stunt". In his hand is a child's stick drawing of prophet Muhammad. The proverb "an orange in the turban" is a Danish expression meaning "a stroke of luck" here, indicating the added publicity for his book (Klausen, 2006 March).

Cartoon 12

A police line-up of seven people wearing turbans, with a witness saying: "Hm... jeg kan ikke lige genkende ham" ("Hm... I can't really recognize him"). Not all people in the line are immediately identifiable. They are: (1) A generic Hippie, (2) right-wing politician Pia Kærsgaard, (3) possibly Jesus, (4) possibly Buddha, (5) possibly prophet Muhammad, (6) generic Indian Guru, and (7) journalist Kåre Bluitgen, carrying a sign saying: "Kåres PR, ring og få et tilbud" ("Kåre's public relations, call and get an offer").

FOOTNOTE

*Muhammad Ansigt (2005, September 30). Jyllands-Posten / KulturWeekend, p. 3. Retrieved April 7 2006, from http://epaper.jp.dk/30-09-2005/demo/JP_04-03.html

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