

Working Papers in International Journalism/Arbeitshefte Internationaler Journalismus
Series Editor/Herausgeber der Reihe Gerd G. Kopper
2007/1

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Reading the Mohammed Cartoons Controversy

An International Analysis of Press Discourses
on Free Speech and Political Spin

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie;
detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

ISSN 1619-8360

ISBN 978-3-89733-167-9

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Internet: www.projektverlag.de

Herausgeber der Reihe: Gerd G. Kopper

Satz und Layout: Oliver Schröder

Printed in Germany

The Working Papers in international Journalism

are a series of publications for recent studies, reports from research groups and projects, issued by a number of institutions. They also present informative material and documents that are relevant for the international research community.

Editorial

The present publication within the series of Working Papers in International Journalism represents the results of a worldwide cooperation of scholars and research groups analysing an incident and a debate in the international media that led to extremely controversial opinions, statements and fundamental views, some months ago: whether, how and for what reasons there should be caricatures aiming at most highly valued religious issues and, furthermore, be produced and distributed by newspapers.

This publication represents, within this series of Working Papers, an interim state of development of the Research Consortium at the University of Dortmund in the area of International Journalism as it is, still, flagged out on the cover. At Dortmund the first university chair in International Journalism in Germany has been inaugurated in 1998 as an endowment professorship by the Erich-Brost-Institut for Journalism in Europe, a non profitable organization, founded privately in 1991, for the promotion of science, concentrating on international journalism research and teaching with an emphasis on Europe.

During the span of the years 1996 - 2006 the plan for a Centre of Advanced Study in International Journalism (CAS), including this new chair and a newly constructed functional building for the Centre, at Dortmund, went into action. This was the starting phase, also, for this series of Working Papers and its consortium. The initial concept and organizational background of the series ended in autumn of 2006 when the CAS finished its activities at the University of Dortmund, and is now being transferred into a new framework of multi-national networking structures of global reach that shall become institutionalized within a subsequent phase.

The present scholarly work and debate published at this stage of development of CAS, within this series, fits well into the present phase of innovation and fresh concepts. The new CAS will emphasise widened scopes of research and analysis and it will strengthen a global, not exclusively European perspective.

Dortmund, Berlin, Tokyo April 2007 Gerd G. Kopper
Editor
Working Papers in
International Journalism

Acknowledgements

This research project was based on discussions with John Durham Peters in 2005 and 2006, without neither of us being aware of the fact. Once the idea was turned into operational form, Kaarle Nordenstreng helped with his international connections to locate people. Quite a few people helped me finding other people. In my home department I have also been able to develop these ideas with a number of colleagues. I want to thank them collectively, but Anssi Männistö, being an expert on the subject, deserves special thanks.

This project would have not been possible at all without the support of *Helsingin Sanomat Foundation*. I want to thank the board of the foundation and particularly the president of the foundation Heleena Savela for enabling us to kick the project off so fast and the support and help along the way.

All the academics contributing to this book committed themselves to extra load of work on a short notice and also took the time to travel for two intensive workshops in Finland during 2006. It has been a pleasure to work with such an impressive group of people.

Elisabeth Eide took time from an already tight schedule in February to work through all the chapters. Oliver Hahn and Roland Schröder contributed to the editing in Dortmund. Oliver Schröder handled the typesetting and layout on a very tight schedule.

We were fortunate enough to enjoy the intelligent language coaching of Melissa Poole from Missouri, and Mary Mc-Donald-Rissanen from Tampere.

Finally, I want to thank the Working paper series editor Gerd Kopper for accepting the work for publication on short notice and with a very tight schedule. For the project it was essential that we can share the first findings and results with the larger academic community without delay.

All the findings and interpretations in these 14 country reports are necessarily preliminary. We look forward to developing the themes and questions of this report together and with other colleagues.

Tampere, April 1 2007

Risto Kunelius

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The Mohammed cartoons, journalism, free speech and globalization

Risto Kunelius & Elisabeth Eide

“I disagree with what you say and even if you are threatened with death I will not defend very strongly your right to say it”. That, with apologies Voltaire, seems to have been the initial pathetic response of some western governments to the republication by many European newspapers of several cartoons of Muhammad first published in a Danish newspaper in September. (*The Economist*, Editorial, 11.2. 2006)

In some ways, the first lines of the editorial of *The Economist* perfectly draw together the starting point of this project. By the second week of February 2006, it had become clear that a controversy that was initiated in Denmark had ceased to be *exclusively* a battle between the Danes and the “Islam world”. It had turned into an international debate about some of the core values the Western world and in particular journalists claim to live by. Hence, the ironical twisting of the famous Voltarian quote *and* the stinging criticism towards “pathetic” politicians, internationally, as one would expect from a magazine with no particular homeland to defend.

This book grew out of an idea provoked by *The Economist* editorial. The Mohammed controversy had created a situation where the *question of* freedom of speech (or the press) had suddenly become international news. This, we felt, provided an opportunity to study how this key notion of modern journalism was defined, defended and criticised *in the press* and *by the press* itself. In a world increasingly described as not only globalised but also mediated, this seemed like an issue of burning importance. With the help of a number of colleagues we collected an international team of researchers who agreed to study and analyse the local coverage of the incident in their respective contexts. Altogether 14 countries were finally included, and after two intensive workshops and a year of work, this book reports the first phase of the project. It provides a close look at 14 different contexts in which the debate about the Mohammed cartoons unfolded and in which the notion of “freedom of speech” (or press) was *redefined for* the 21st century.

In this introduction we will only be able scratch the surface of these detailed analyses and sketch some suggestive frames of interpretation for this endeavour. The actual substance of the project at this point lies in the national reports. However, in order to provide a rough roadmap through the detailed analysis of national teams, we want

to (i) discuss briefly the problem of the news “event” itself and its limits, (ii) introduce the materials and some basic methodological commitments of the project, (iii) list some of the most central research questions and (iv) suggest some preliminary findings on an international level.

Shaping the event

In a media research project focusing on a particular event or series of events that seem to be interconnected an obvious starting point is to ask, *what happened?* Common sense begs one to begin by offering the essential shared facts of the case before entering into an analysis of how these facts were mediated.

For any contemporary media researcher this is of course a dangerously naive starting point and with the case at hand this is particularly true. We know that “events” do not only take place but that they are in fact constructed and framed by the media. It is *in* communication that the beginnings, endings and causal relationships are suggested, verified and believed. In journalism, the technological and economic structures of the media industry, the shared routines, discourses and frames of media professionals - along with the inherited interpretation schemes of their audiences - all work together to shape a stream of occurrences into comprehensible “events”. Indeed, some scholars have argued that the “production of events” is what journalism essentially does. (Ekecrantz 1997). Given a different media, a different frame and another audience, any story can be and will be told differently. The project team broadly shares this view of media’s role in constructing realities. Indeed, it is these very constructions that the project wants to analyse. However, we still want to start by offering a short version of what “happened”.

In some concrete sense what came to be known as the “caricature or cartoon controversy” started at a local level, at least when seen from a global perspective. A Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* with a circulation of around 150 000 on September 30 2005 published twelve efforts to draw an image of the Prophet Mohammed. A couple of weeks before this however journalists in Denmark had reported author Kåre Bluitgen’s difficulties in finding an illustrator for his children’s book on the Qura’n and the life of the Prophet Mohammed. In a news agency story from September 16 with Bluitgen as its sole source several newspapers reported that two artists had declined Bluitgen’s invitation but a third

took it on anonymously. Another way of dating the beginning then would be to say that it was the problem of the book illustration that triggered *Jyllands-Posten's* decision to approach some 42 cartoonists asking them for submissions. Twelve cartoonists ended up drawing their versions, three of whom were already working for the paper.

In any case, the twelve pictures were published accompanied by the following text:

The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule. It is certainly not always attractive and nice to look at, and it does not mean that religious feelings should be made fun of at any price, but that is of minor importance in the present context. [...] we are on our way to a slippery slope where no-one can tell how the self-censorship will end. That is why *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* has invited members of the Danish editorial cartoonists union to draw Mohammed as they see him. [...]

Since that day, 30th of September 2005, there have been various interpretations of the events on different levels and the ways in which they are linked to this act of publication. On the one hand there is the version represented by the editors of *Jyllands-Posten* themselves. They claim that the publication was an attempt to stem the growing self-censorship in the Danish public sphere. This self-imposed censorship, they say, is due to the fear of hurting some minorities' feelings, hence the metaphor of a "slippery slope" refers to "us" being too politically correct when voluntarily surrendering to self-censorship. On the other hand there is a view of events more popular in diasporas and in many Muslim countries that the caricatures represented a well thought-out strategy to provoke Muslims and further contribute to Samuel Huntington's (1993) prophecy about the "clash of civilizations" becoming more of a truism. A more modified interpretation from the same side of the debate was the claim that the publication was an indication of European editors' poor understanding of the feelings and traditions of the more than one billion Muslims around the world.

On October 14, 2005 about 3000 people in Copenhagen took to the streets and protested over the publication of the cartoons. The very same day two of the cartoonists were advised to go into hiding after receiving death threats. Thus, despite the fact that both sides of the debate were recognized early on, it is important to remember that interpreta-

tions of the "initial" act itself did not only vary "between cultures" but also "within" them. Some Danish critics have emphasised that already before September 30 other rather hateful caricatures of Muslims had been published in the same newspaper and that the paper in general harboured a rather harsh critique against Muslims in Denmark. As a Swedish journalist pointed out, from this perspective the act of publishing the 12 cartoon was seen as a "token of friendship with the government" which relies on the support of a right wing party, one highly critical of immigration. This criticism in fact suggests yet another "starting point" for the event namely, the internal political dispute over immigration in Denmark. And just as there were different sides to the issue in Denmark, in predominantly Muslim countries such as Pakistan there were people who did not promote "conspiracy theories" as an explanation for the publication. They rather suggested that the reason for the controversy was the fact that European societies simply were more secular.

The caricatures first appeared at the end of September and one of the next newspapers to publish one of them, was, the Egyptian newspaper *El Fagr* on its front page¹. The next important event in Denmark occurred when ten ambassadors from Muslim countries, in a letter dated October 12, asked to meet the Danish Prime Minister in order to discuss the general situation of Muslims in Denmark, using the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons as one example of the problematic atmosphere. Taking issue only with the *Jyllands-Posten* example prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen turned down their request². Referring to the media in Denmark being free from government interference he framed the "event" as a question of the freedom of the press. At this point the issue started taking on a more global character. The ambassadors represented countries with approximately a half a billion Muslims. On October 19, the same day the prime minister turned down the negotiation the cartoons were mentioned by *Al-Jazeera*. At the end of October, several Muslim organizations in Denmark filed a complaint with the Danish police claiming that *Jyllands-Posten* had violated two paragraphs in the Danish Criminal Code. The claim was later turned down a year later, in October 2006.

In December 2005 two delegations of Danish Imams travelled to Egypt and several countries in the Middle East. As a consequence the issue was raised at the OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) summit by the Egyptian Foreign Secretary. Generally speaking, and certainly concerning the international news flows, the event was still bubbling under the surface. A continuous debate, however, was going on in Denmark where other cartoons were published by *Weekendavisen* and in Germany where *Die Welt* pub-

lished one of the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons in November. The Council of Europe criticized the Danish government's handling of the issue in December. In his New Year speech Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that he would "condemn any expression, action or indication that attempts to demonize groups of people", but did not specify further. The pressure from Muslim countries had begun with hints of a boycott which was to hurt the Danish economy substantially³.

In January 2006, the small Norwegian Christian journal *Magazinet* published the cartoons and in early February when the controversy was fully blown into the global media sphere, a row of European and other newspapers followed by publishing one or all of the cartoons. By this time the "event" had in the Western media been framed as first and foremost as a "free speech" issue and sides were being taken⁴. From then on the protest demonstrations became more widespread with some displaying elements of violence. All in all more than 130 people have been killed in events somehow related to this violence. However convincingly it may be argued that many of these deaths also had deeper roots in the history or in the local political conditions, this death toll is a terrible consequence of collective misunderstanding and a lack of communication⁵. In addition, several editors and journalists lost their jobs due to their attitude towards the cartoons or their republishing while others are in prison, as is the case in Yemen. In March 2007 as we write this some of those who demonstrated against the cartoons in the UK have also been convicted while the editor of the French magazine *Charlie's Hebdo* was just acquitted from charges made by French Muslim organisations.

Thus, the event lives on. This further emphasises the importance of critical research and reflection. When the media clearly plays an increasingly important role in the construction of the way "events" are shaped it is of fundamental importance to create a more nuanced and critical understanding of how the crafting of events takes place. We need to be increasingly aware of what is the active (albeit not always fully conscious) role of the media in the seemingly naturally unfolding (global) media events. Thus, if a news report or a reportage is an act of shaping the event (such as claiming that the cartoon issue is only and foremost about freedom of speech), an analysis of a media event eventually is an act of asking for alternative frames and interpretations (how the issue was, could have been or perhaps should have been framed differently). Consequently, the analyses in this project are all situated within a *broad notion of the freedom of speech*. We take it as our point of departure that the ideas "we" believe in are placed under critical scrutiny where heretical notions are

valued and taken seriously and where freedom of speech is a matter of critical self-assessment rather than an abstract measure of what is acceptable and right.

Interconnected questions

Initially, this project was launched within the main frame of interpretation offered by - what else - the Western news media. Our excerpt from *The Economist* at the beginning of this chapter captures this frame in an effective and clear formulation: the caricature controversy is about the limits of freedom of speech. The very first research question that we wanted to pose was to *look at how the news media around the world produced definitions of freedom of speech* and the factors that legitimately set limits to it. We saw the global event as an opportunity to analyse and compare *how the news media explicitly discussed one of its key values (if not the key value) of legitimating*. During an era where the media is an increasingly important political factor in the world, we felt that this was an interesting and a pressing task. Whatever its ideological limits, the fact remains that a *debate* about the global role of the media will also be a debate about its real or imagined "freedom" from governments, religions and markets. The discourse about "freedom" is the hegemonic vocabulary with which power argues and defends itself. Thus, the concept of free speech is and should be very much under scrutiny these days (cf. Peters 2005, Winston 2005, McNair 2006). Thus, whether or not the dominant frame of free speech initially was partly or completely an ideological one, the fact remains that the cartoon case offers *one* prism through which to also ground this debate *empirically*.

Very quickly, and not very surprisingly, it became clear that the analysis of free speech definition could not be separated from other debates raging in academic and political arenas. Clearly the caricature case and its appearance as a "freedom debate" must also be put into the context of the current world order and the discourses that inform our understanding about that order. Thus, from the empirical materials it became apparent that the research also offered a chance for analysing *the different ways in which journalism and journalists situated themselves in the imagined political (and religious) world order*. The findings and interpretations of the reports are also a contribution to a long and increasingly important debate about the role of media in the (re)production of an *orientalist* (Said 1979) worldview and its various and inevitable counter-discourses, such as different versions of *occidentalism* (Carrier 1999, Buruma & Margalit 2005)⁶. A broader analysis of the caricatures them-

selves, inspired by the Western, Orientalism critique, would be an interesting future endeavour⁷. The counter-discourses labelled as Occidentalism, may be seen either as an “Eastern” representation of the West in a crude and essentialist manner partly parallel to the Orientalist representation of the east⁸. Or, as Carrier argues, Occidentalism may also mean that in the process of othering Orientals, Western writers create rather essentialist and narrow images of the West itself and thereby contribute to the polarization processes. In the arguments raised during the cartoon coverage Orientalism and its counter-discourses were clearly at play: on the one hand there was a strong emphasis on the “irrational” reactions to the cartoons in the “East” and on the other hand there was an equally strong opposition to the “Western insensitivity and fundamentalist secularism”.

This broad discussion about the East-West is also connected to a more concrete and politically active discourse around the notion of “clash of civilizations” made famous by Samuel Huntington already some 15 years ago. Whereas terms like *orientalism* were hardly mentioned in the cartoon debate, the notion of “clash of civilizations” became one of the key phrases of the coverage. Thus, despite the many positions taken for and against the relevance of the “clash of civilisations” -phrase, one can say that it operated (together and in connection to the “freedom of speech” frame) as one of the most powerful general frames of the coverage. It was explicitly widely used in the opinion materials we studied. In a more implicit, but no less clear way, it informed much of the international flow of news and images⁹.

While the 14 chapters of this volume show that there were numerous other questions initiated by the cartoon event, a third general question is worth pointing out. It concerns the way journalists and journalism position themselves in relation to other actors and institutions. One formulation of this problem area has been the recent research around the notion of a “journalistic field” (Benson & Neveu 2005). Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu (cf. 1998), this concept focuses our attention on the relative independence of journalism in relation to other social institutions (or fields). The cartoon discussion provided a particularly interesting case for looking at *how the “journalistic field” is related to the “political field” in different countries*, i.e. how journalism distributes and challenges the political order of its home territory¹⁰. In some countries we may identify a strong religious-oriented sub-field within the political field coming into play in this case¹¹. Across the project we can see how vitally important the *domestic* context and local actors are to the way in which the debate unfolds and how politicians are one of the key actors in this sense. But while this research verifies earlier find-

ings about the importance of “national prisms” in the global news flow (cf. Lee, Chan, Pan & So 2004, Nossek 2004) it also points to more general and global questions about *culturally shared traits of professional journalism and their importance in connection to global media events where the media constitute themselves as players*. This leads to a much more diverse set of questions that the project has only started to unpack, but the work will continue beyond this report with more a transnational perspective.

These three broad questions - definitions of free speech, imagined world orders, and the positions and role of journalism - are closely interrelated in each national or local report published in this book. All the authors do not engage with every question with equal strength. In this sense the reports reflect local particularities of both the context and the way the case was covered. But we believe that as a first draft of intersecting themes, these three ideas are a useful roadmap for a reader who embarks on the journey through 14 versions of the Mohammed cartoon controversy. In future publications of the project these themes will be developed further¹².

Countries and contexts, materials and methods

Comparative international research is based on diversity of contexts and unfortunately even in the supposedly rather “universalistic” culture of academia one’s horizon and connections are limited. The countries involved in this project were chosen with an attempt to provide diversity concerning the main contexts which we feel are important for the media: political, economical, and cultural. These contexts situated media in different countries into different positions relative to the event itself and to other social actors and institutions. While we feel we reached an interesting diversity of contexts, we are also painfully aware that our inventory is not exhaustive by any means. The selection of countries omits Sub-Saharan Africa, Southern Far-East and Latin-America. This reflects both our limited academic contexts and the “Euro-ethno-centric” hegemonic mental landscape of the media research field. We can only hope that further discussions of our results and findings as well the next phase of the project will enable us to include an even wider circle of colleagues and professionals.

The countries involved in the project may be clustered in many ways. One way would be to follow Hallin and Mancini (2004) and say that the four Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland) and Germany are part of the *corporatist* media tradition, whereas France carries more signs of a *pluralist* model. The UK, US and Canada would

presumably fit fairly well the description of a *liberal* media model. But stepping outside the immediate Western realm, these categories fail to capture the complexity of other models. Even if Israel could be considered a somewhat special, modified model of the Western media systems, Russia, Egypt, Pakistan and China do not fit a single alternative model. Defining them all as “transitional” seems both far too loose and evolutionary, not to mention that combining them under one category would overlook the diverse political, religious and cultural factors that shape the role of the media in these countries. And be that as it may, even a cursory glance at the cartoon controversy reveals the problems of the Western-based categorizations, at least as an explanation frame, and therefore the reactions to the cartoons cannot in any way be reduced to (nor could they have been predicted by) these traditions. For instance, of the liberal countries turned out to be rather moderate while some of the presumably consensus-oriented corporatist countries were revealed to be rather pluralist.

In terms of political, economic and legal contexts it is notoriously difficult to provide accurate comparisons on the conditions of “free press”. All attempts are problematic since the notion of freedom on press/speech is itself open to various philosophical and political criticisms. But bearing in mind that for instance *Freedom House*’s often quoted survey of global media independence can be criticised for being biased towards a particular brand of liberalism¹³, pinpointing the chosen countries on its general scale offers one way of formally comparing the local conditions in which journalists work. Table 1. draws together this data from 2005.

Table 1. The countries involved in the project with their respective ranking in the *Freedom of the Press 2005* survey

Country	Legal status	Political status	Economic status	Overall status	Publication of the cartoons ¹⁴
Finland	2	3	4	9	NO
Sweden	2	4	4	10	NO
Denmark	2	3	5	10	YES
Norway	3	3	4	10	YES
Germany	5	6	5	16	YES
US	6	6	4	16	YES
Canada	4	8	6	18	YES
UK	5	7	7	19	NO
France	5	9	7	21	YES
Israel	5	13	10	28	NO
Pakistan	18	25	18	61	NO
Egypt	22	21	18	61	YES
Russia	16	32	24	72	YES
China	27	34	22	83	NO

In the *Freedom House* survey legal ranking examines the existence of laws and regulations that could influence media content as well as the government’s inclination to use these laws. The political environment examines the extent of political control over news media, editorial independence, access to information sources, possible intimidation of journalists, etc. The economic environment studies the structure and transparency of media ownership, selective advertising policy by the state, corruption and bribery, etc. In order to contextualize this information, it is worth noting that in the cartoon case the *Freedom House* position was and is to support *Jyllands-Posten*’s arguments and criticize both Western newspaper editors and politicians for their attempts to “skate a fine line between a defence of freedom of the press and the apparent requirements of sensitivity in an era of globalization and multiculturalism” (Puddington, 2006; for a more detailed list of survey questions and brief descriptions of the situation of each country in 2005, see *Freedom House*, 2006.) While the survey offers a formal comparison of some important contextual elements when looked at against the evidence of the cartoon case, this categorization also offers a less than convincing explanation. Should we take the act of publication of the cartoons as an indicator of an alliance with the core value of liberal “freedom” we would quickly see that there were obviously either other criteria at play when decisions about publication were made or more importantly “freedom” was defined in another way. Also, the “fact” of publication is not a simple issue. In many countries many newspapers chose not to “publish” the original cartoon but decided “show” them all the same, by printing news photos of newspapers that had actually published the pictures. This style of “photographic citation”, which can be seen as form of a “strategic ritual” of objectivity (Tuchman 1978) and a technique of circumventing responsibility, is a testimony of the fact that the issue was a difficult one indeed.

In terms of world politics, the countries involved are also differently situated. Without launching into a full fledged analysis of geopolitics one can point to some obvious relevant points. First, the debate about the cartoons became mainly a dispute between Europe (or the West) and what was called the “Islamic world”. This meant that central and powerful European countries were clearly more implicated in the controversy than for instance the US, which for a long time seemed to want to stay rather detached and neutral. Inside Europe, for instance the UK and France were situated rather differently. In France, with its large Muslim minority and an active history of public debates concerning religious symbols, politicians opted for a modest and diplomatic line of commentary, but were later

challenged by the press when several French newspapers (*France Soir*, *Liberation*) for various reasons ended up publishing the cartoons. In the UK both the press and politicians started from a shared detached position to the event, but public demonstrations against the cartoon somewhat hardened the liberalism of the press. On the “other” side of the controversy, in Egypt and Pakistan, the event also created problems of negotiating between the political and religious divisions inside the countries and the foreign relations imperatives of the rulers of the countries. Further away from the principal division of the debate (Europe vs. the “Muslim world”), in China and Russia for instance, we can see clear signs of politicians and state actors trying hard and succeeding in not being drawn into the conflict and trying to manage the conflict as “foreign affairs”, not implicating for instance their own Muslim minorities.

Finally, the countries involved differ when it comes to the degree to which the “Islam-West” division is also important in the domestic political agenda. The question of multiculturalism and integration is clearly present in all of the countries involved but it is tackled very differently. For instance, in the very rapidly multiculturalising Canada broad explicit legal arrangements set limits to the public communication. In Israel, the state and the hegemonic majority culture allows other ethnic or cultural minorities freedom of expression *in their own language* and culture as long as they accept the basic rules of the common public sphere. In China, ethnic and religious minorities are clearly subjected to the official ideology. In France, the ideology of a secular nation state (the principle of *laïcité*) provides a powerful frame for the debate. Pakistan, for one, is an example of a complex superficial consensus under which religious tensions and the influence diaspora are obvious. The list could go on.

These general remarks merely begin to open the diversity of contexts from which the materials for this study were collected. Most country reports go further into details about the historical, political and cultural contexts in which the analysed materials appeared.

The core research materials for this study were gathered from mainstream newspapers and magazines. In each country the national team chose a sample of 5-6 newspapers and additional news magazines when deemed useful. Newspapers were chosen with an attempt to cover the diversity of political-religious, national-local, and quality-popular dimensions in a given context.

The chosen materials carry at least two kinds of “biases” with them. First, they privilege the “print tradition”. Sec-

ond, they focus on the mainstream representations and views of *the media*. In both ways the results of our analysis are not reflective of the full depth of the cultural contexts we study. The “audience” enters these materials only as the imagined construction of editors. And albeit that this is what we wanted to study (the professional self-image reflected in these representations), it is important to bear in mind that cultures are diversified also “vertically” and inside their own domains. Print media can be more detached than television and more “factually oriented” than the internet. Public views and opinions in editorials can be more cautious than the vernacular and mundane debates. It is also deceptively easy to slip into a language that describes *nations* as actors in the event, as we did above with the Freedom House data¹⁵. Just as “Denmark” did not publish the initial cartoon but rather some people and institutions in Denmark, neither “Pakistani” nor “US” reactions to the event can be exhaustively described by looking at newspaper reactions. In some political contexts much of the actual diversity of debate lies elsewhere, particularly in the Internet. In this sense, then the editorial and commentaries published in the newspapers are not representative materials.

However, we do believe that an analysis of editorial and comment material from mainstream newspapers can be, with caution, used as an indicator of the range of culturally acceptable social imagination on the issue. When writing an editorial or a comment one could argue that an author most often is forced to also somehow recognize the positions with which s/he disagrees (Alasuutari 1994, 27-29). Thus, editorials help us at least to map the terrain of *legitimate public controversy* on a given issue. This is noteworthy not only methodologically but also politically. If this material offers and inventory of the legitimate range of public opinions, perhaps it also enables us to track the *potential for negotiation* and dialogue, our ability to *recognize* opponents and take their arguments at least somewhat seriously.

The fourteen reports of this book all aim at tackling the same broad research question but their methodological choices differ somewhat. Some research teams prefer to call their analysis “discourse analysis”, others prefer to talk about “framing” or “qualitative close reading”. While these differences in vocabularies reflect genuinely different emphasis of approach, there is also a shared perspective. All research reports look at journalism as an act of constructing facts, representations and identities and they aim at identifying the *main organising principles* that underlie the analysed coverage. Thus, in all the reports we are dealing with analysing media texts as actualizations of discourses (cf. Fairclough 1995).

In this very broad definition media *discourse* is firstly seen as a field of linguistic practices with its own internal differentiation, logic of operations and object of representation. In media, discursive signification practices are tied to the professional production routines and identities of journalists, and thus further the position of the media in relation to its audience, routine sources and other contextual factors. Journalism as a media discourse is an institutionally reproduced and contextualized way of making sense of current affairs. It is dependent on its immediate context, as for instance on the market position and the political affiliations of a given media, and the professional ideology of its work force (journalists). In addition to professional and institutional constraints, media discourses are also linked to the traditions of thought and paradigms of knowledge, both present and dominant in their contexts. Thus, when analysing for instance the Finnish cartoon coverage one needs to look not just at the professional legacy of Finnish journalism and the position of a given medium in the whole Finnish journalistic field but also the tradition of free speech and the politics of national identity in general. The guiding principle of such an analysis is that *journalism, just as other discourses, is dependent on but not reducible to its context*. As a discourse journalism mediates, reproduces and reorganises the knowledge shaped in other institutional settings and discourses but at the same time journalism is a form of knowledge production of its own. This understanding of journalism as discourse aims at combining some strengths of discourse analysis in analysing texts and identifying the characteristics of various discourses with a study of journalism as a 'field' of knowledge production (cf. Eide, 2006; Kunelius, 1996: 94-114)

A shared methodological focus of the project is the belief that by closely analysing *texts* (that is, particular utterances in particular contexts) we can make reasonable, relevant and reliable conclusions about the way in which the general rules of discourse at hand operate and how discourse is related to social power. Different national reports approach this research object in slightly different ways. There are at least three broad versions used. First, some teams have chosen to work in a rather traditional manner of discourse analysis starting from the linguistic characteristics (key words, metaphors, distinctions, representation of various actors, time/space constructions, etc.) of texts and working towards the more general discursive patterns in which "freedom of speech" is defined (see for instance Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden and UK). Other teams have taken the existing and logically recognizable paradigms of free speech as their starting point and made sense of their materials by first coding their

coverage into general types before entering into a more detailed description of each version (see US, Canada, also Israel). Some reports draw distinctively from their local context and the analytic distinctions that tackle the role of the press in particular contexts. In Pakistan and to a degree in Russia and China we can see interesting traces of counter-discourses towards Western definitions and thus the analytic categories applied are different, whereas in Egypt and in China other themes were prioritized.

While discourse analysis of this kind is guided by a principle of making systematic observations and aims at creating a trustworthy description of the organising principles of a given event, critical discourse analysis nevertheless always has a "political edge" to it. Discourses are analysed in and by other discourses, organizing principles are revealed by suggesting other or different organising principles. In critical discourse analysis, then, an important mechanism for securing the scientific validity of results is to provide the means with which validity questions about the analysis can be asked, and commit the results to further dialogue within the scientific community. This is one reason why we have chosen to produce a relatively quick version of working papers for the public domain.

During the editing process of this final report we have continuously been reminded of what a challenging and deeply interesting field of questions emerge when one sets on the path of trying to build "qualitative comparisons". The project relied on academics from different cultures and contexts to make use of their best skills, understanding and intuition to provide an interesting reading of their own particular case. We have not been calling for a common set of categories into which all 14 cases should be reduced because we felt that this would be against the original idea of trying to further any understanding of the variety of ways in which the cartoon case was made to make sense. Throughout the project we have been confident that this was the right choice, and we can only hope that our readers agree. Having said that we do think that in an era of increasing global media and global media research there is a lot to be done in academia for developing ways in which we could produce a more commonly shared body of knowledge, without losing our sensitivity to the diversity and richness of local traditions.

The analyses in this volume reflect the slightly different historical experiences and methodological traditions of the 14 countries and their respective media research communities. However, in broad terms, the analyses and our discussions about the event were framed by what one might call

a critical understanding of the current role of news media in global and local circumstances. We have all wanted to look critically at the role of media *as political actors* in the broad sense of the word and consequently have been interested in the potential of the professional community of journalists to be publicly *self-critical*. As a result there is broad agreement about the fact that preferably journalism and media should, in a global context, have a commitment to enhancing a *communicative* understanding among people, cultures and societies. This is as much as can generally be said about the unavoidable political bias of the effort. The rest of the nuances of the contributors' individual positions can be read from their reports.

Preliminary findings and further questions

We have now reached a point in our research project where, after extensive work in the local contexts, we are beginning to see some general characteristics of the coverage on a global scale (of the 14 countries). The project intends to develop these as well as other general themes and findings in the near future, but at this point, we wish merely to briefly open some discussion.

Freedom of speech: the shape of the discursive field

Reading through the national reports one becomes aware of the fact that in terms of "freedom of speech" some principal positions emerge. Many reports suggest that there is a dimension between rather radical Western liberalism and a more multicultural position. Often because of a variety of local constraints (ethnic minorities, political traditions, legal frameworks, etc.) there are popular but somewhat vague positions "between" these two main positions. This general finding is, of course, almost logical and not very surprising. However, while struggling to make sense of what these three positions are based on we have tentatively come up with a slightly new kind of conceptual framework. The framework can briefly be introduced by suggesting two dimensions that underlie different positions in the debate about the cartoons.

First, there is the unavoidable question which is often explicitly talked about namely, how does the author (or the text, or the discourse underneath the text) define the status of "freedom of speech" as a value. Obviously, one extreme end of this dimension is the *liberal* (modern) version of seeing freedom of speech as a historically transcendent universal value. In this view, freedom of speech is one the

(if not the) fundamental forces of human history and a unique part of our heritage. It is the only reliable "method" for guarding truth against the falsehoods and bias of power, or it is the key characteristic of a culture that cultivates tolerance. In any case its value is beyond doubt and its meaning and importance transcends individual suffering and feelings. At the other extreme of this dimension is a thoroughly *culturalist* view which sees "freedom of speech" as just a culturally specific "local" ideological concept. This position questions the universalism of modernity in general and of "free speech" in particular.

To a large extent the vocabulary of the debate in many (particularly Western) countries was shaped by this dimension between the universalism (liberalism) and relativism (culturalism) of this dimension. Journalists and editorials positioned themselves to a varying degree towards the first position whereas critics of the cartoons often looked for their rhetoric ammunition from the latter one. But in many cases, this one dimension fails to capture the differences *among* the 'liberal' and 'culturalist' (or universal and relative, or modern and late-modern, respectively) positions. This is why we suggest that another, albeit more implicit and underlying, dimension helps us to elaborate the debate on the freedom of speech and also helps us to see some its political consequences.

The second question is about communication, or more precisely, about *communicativeness*, that is, what is the broadly rational potential of communication and public deliberation. At one end of dimension there is the idea of languages as ultimately culturally closed games where the limits of dialogue, and possibilities of understanding, are given by the limits of culture and identities. This position will emphasize that theoretically at least, power and exclusion are always present in a given practice of deliberation and rules of "rationality": hence, when you see "reason" leading into a consensus, you also see exclusion of some interests and identities. For this position, language operates more as a mechanism of closing our cultural horizons rather than one of opening them up. Deliberation or dialogue are possible only between relatively shared forms of identity, a shared identity is seen as a necessary precondition for dialogue. We may thus name this the *identity-end* of the dimension of communicativeness. On the other end we would find the reverse belief. According to this position, language and communication are mutually potential means for an intersubjective and intercultural exchange in which experiences and arguments travel across cultural boundaries and the borders of collectively shared identities. On this *dialogue-end* of the dimension language is

potentially a mechanism which opens up our horizons and creates a possibility for intercultural insights.

Technically speaking, the identity-end of these dimensions (though not of course for individual thinkers) borders on “fundamentalism”. Its logic is based on a distinction between “us” and the “rest” and this distinction is grounded on values that cannot be negotiated. Thus, sacred texts, values or dogma are not to be interpreted, only followed. Extremely taken, this is fundamentalism in the “necrophilic” sense of the word (Eagleton, 2004: 201-205) where texts are merely carriers of (stable, sacred) meaning and contexts and interpretations only contaminate this sacredness. On this end of the dimension, people or groups who are interpreted as *essentially different* are never seen as able to reach a genuine consensus, although interaction between radically different people might lead to one becoming *converted* into the other. On the dialogue-end of the dimension we come not only closer to the virtues of diplomacy and real politics but also to the fundamental idea that cross-cultural dialogue is possible and worthwhile. On dialogue-end, the very fact that a conversation and exchange is still going on (and has not turned into politics by other means) is a valuable achievement in itself. It is based on a belief here that despite all the difficulties and misunderstandings the fact that we live in a shared world makes rational and reasonable communication possible. Thus, there is a belief in the *chance* of overcoming and extending the limits of given identities where over time, with patience, different cultures can learn from each other.

These two dimensions, the liberal-cultural axis and the identity-dialogue-axis, help us to build a conceptual landscape in which to think of how “freedom of speech” was defined in the cartoon case. (see Figure 1.)

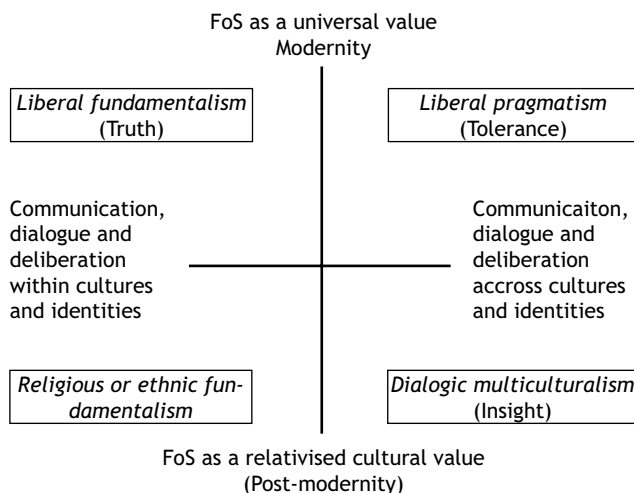


Figure 1. Four extreme positions in terms on Freedom of Speech and Communication/Deliberation

Distinguishing between two dimensions has one conceptual benefit as it enables us to differentiate between the four extreme (logical) positions.

(i) Although ‘*liberal fundamentalism*’ might sound like an oxymoron, technically it is a conceivable position: the heritage of modernity is cultivated into a position where freedom of speech is seen as the primary value to defend and uphold. This means that transgressions of the cultural boundaries of habit or taste are deemed legitimate, and indeed welcome.¹⁶ (Some journalists found it important to defend the cartoon precisely *because* they were of bad taste). The position legitimises itself either in the name of being the way to discover the Truth, or by saying that this method will, through exposing people to extreme otherness, cultivate *tolerance*. But there is nothing beyond tolerance, no need to learn from others except in the ultimate case of being converted into a new paradigm. Without accepting the universality of freedom of speech as a starting point, communication with someone in this position is difficult. Consequently, for those who occupy this position, the world is inhabited by a multitude of “others”. With them, the argument goes, communication is rather hopeless. Other means are needed to defend freedom of speech. For a liberal fundamentalist, deliberation about freedom of speech (see below) is “out of bounds” and not part of the language game they agree to *play*.

(ii) *Liberal pragmatism* shares with its more fundamentalist counterpart the high respect for freedom of speech and the project of modern secularisation. But it refuses to submit everything to the imperative of freedom, and actually thinks that its universal tendencies have to be tempered with a sense of more practical and local considerations. This was, for a variety of reasons, the position assumed by many western political leaders as well a number of editorial writers in the debate. Thus, a liberal pragmatist would consider keeping the dialogue going more important than guarding the absolute purity of freedom of speech. In some sense, one could argue that such pragmatism is based on the culture of tolerance cultivated by a belief in the previous position (i), but pragmatism also takes more dialogic forms. It suggests that the very principle of freedom of speech, by virtue of being a concept *used* in changing political contexts, must be seen as an object of negotiation and interpretation.

(iii) *Dialogic multiculturalism* shares with pragmatism the attitude that conversation and dialogue are

the essence of the human condition. They see dialogue and intercultural conversation potentially as ways of learning, and since this is the ‘highest’ form of human activity, dialogue should be prioritized over the absolutization of freedom of speech. But when liberal pragmatism sees freedom of speech as a particularly great achievement of the Western world (and one worth saving and cultivating further), multiculturalism is based more on direct *criticism of modernity*, and of rationalism. Indeed, in some ways (in Western academic arenas) this position is an offspring of critical theory, something that emerged out of critical theory after the ‘linguistic turn’.¹⁷ In the cartoon case, a typical argument from this position would claim that all people, groups and cultures have various kinds of censorship related to manners, beliefs, taste and power structures. A more religiously inclined version would claim that it is important to retain a sense of the sacred and an ability to respect the sacredness of others in society.

(iv) The fourth position in the scheme can be tentatively labelled *religious or ethnic fundamentalism*. As a variant of the identity-based position it does not look for consensus, compromises or moments of learning in its encounters with others. This kind of “fundamentalism” argues that local cultures and communities are not only self-sufficient but should also be seen as *sovereign*. It recognizes the cultural relativity of the world but instead of looking for *insight* into other cultural, religious, or political experience (as dialogic multiculturalism would do) it aims at protecting its own stable world order by refusing to *argue* on its behalf. This kind of fundamentalism is, of course, historically a companion of modernity, often appearing as a reaction to modernity. Thus, it takes many forms and it is important to point out that such fundamentalism appears everywhere in the world. In a world dominated by secular discourses, it is often recognized only when it takes the form of religion, but one might well argue that other semi-secular identities (such as the membership of a nation) often function in the same manner.

This is not the place to develop these positions further. But we want to offer this framework for three reasons. First, we see it, at least preliminarily, as one of the conceptual “results” or tentative conclusions of this study. As such it poses a set of more nuanced questions to be tackled by journalists in the future. Posing these questions, and creating a more detailed understanding about how journalism is related to these positions, is a key task for not only un-

derstanding *how* journalism constructs global events and issues but also for building a better argued and defensible position for international journalism.

Second, and on a much more modest level, the framework can operate as one way of finding linkages and points of comparison between national debates and across national empirical findings. The project will work further towards this direction, but at the moment we can point to the fact that in many local reports the “legitimate controversy” takes place between positions (i)-(iii) in figure 1. While the actualisations of these positions are not by any means identical in different countries (and they are always articulated in local contexts and with its resources) the framework above enables us to start analysing them with a common set of analytical tools. Much work - both conceptual and empirical - lies ahead here. But the “grammar” of the free speech discourse, or the “structure of the field”, seems to have many shared characteristics.

Third, on a more methodological and political note, the framework also helps us to situate the research team. While there are considerable differences in the ways in which different teams have approached their materials and also considerable differences in the ways in which their own local contexts effect their position, it is fairly safe to say that the project has been “anti-fundamentalist” in its spirit. This means that authors of the following chapters argue mostly from the communicative/dialogic side of figure 1., sometimes anchoring themselves more clearly and other times oscillating between pragmatist and multicultural perspectives.

Related to this general position, Charles Husband, in his essay *The Right to Communicate*, introduces a pluralistic train of thought concerning citizenship in a mediated public sphere. In addition to the most well known and accepted individual rights he takes up *differentiated group rights* (Husband 2000: 205). A third “generation” of rights may in his opinion supplement the first ones, rights which have to do with active solidarity between peoples and states, such as the right to peace, protection of the environment and development. According to Husband, the right to communicate implies that the state must not only refrain from interfering with individuals’ freedom of expression but it must also create opportunities that facilitate the rights of both individuals and groups to enjoy this freedom. But Husband is also sceptical towards what he calls a reductionist view on freedom of communication. He juxtaposes the right of the individual against a society’s needs for respect of pluralism, dialogue and reciprocity.

...these sentiments reduce a right to communicate to a unidirectional interpretation of first and second generation rights as a licence to encode and decode, transmit and receive, on your own terms. This radical individualism is inconsistent with a society's ability to sustain a respect for diversity, sustained through differentiated citizenship. This self-centred, egotistical and hence ethnocentric, approach to communication is not open to learning, is not concerned with dialogue and reciprocal exchange; rather it commodifies communicative acts as personal exploitation of a resource - communication (Husband 2000:208).

Husband emphasizes the arguments that support a ban on hate speech and racism. An individual does not only have rights concerning his or her own expressions, but also duties towards society. Thus collective rights come into consideration. And, as he concludes, "the right to be understood" should imply that everybody has a duty to try and understand the Other. But for this right to be realized a society needs to distance itself from egocentric acts of communication. One may argue that the right to be understood is not among the universally accepted human rights. But Husband's point really is that without this right the conditions for a multiethnic public sphere are not present.

The 'clash of civilizations': confirmation by denial

Looking at the fourteen local reports of this book, another common theme appearing in many or most countries was the notion of "clash of civilizations". Indeed, journalistically, one might joke about a "Huntington syndrome" among editorial writers around the globe. However, this is not merely a matter of identifying a more or less straightforward acceptance of a think tank ideology. Rather, by paying closer attention to the *use* of the term it might help us to further illuminate the dynamics of current global journalism. Preliminarily speaking, the use of the term "clash of civilizations" in our materials leads to discussing both the inner dynamics and the division of labour of journalistic discourse and its relationship to the ideological climate of the time.

In terms of ideological climate, it is worth pointing out that despite its popularity as a key term in the cartoons debate, the notion of *clash of civilisations* achieved explicitly a rather critical reception. Perhaps the most common way of making use of the notion was to deny it. The "clash" was often referred to as a prediction in the danger of it becoming a self-fulfilling one. It was often also juxtaposed with the idea that the majority of people on

both sides of the imagined clash were actually moderate and wanted to avoid the clash. The image of cultural clash was seen to favour the politics of the extremists. There are, of course, exceptions. Particularly in places where authors were able to situate themselves outside this clash they sometimes also saw it more as an actual reality as in the case of Russia, for instance. But many journalists who identified themselves (via their countries and cultures) as suggested participants of the imagined clash were often at pains to deny the term's full force and consequences. Partly this has to do with the "natural" resistance of all grand ideologies by journalists and partly it is a reaction to the attempt to define "us" as an interested party in a conflict, as one even ready to go war. But partly the resistance to a bipolar world can also be a testimony of an institutional memory of journalism: journalists all over the world are probably somehow aware of the fact that a Manichean world has often been bad for journalism (for freedom of speech and dialogue, whichever they deem more fundamental).

Thus, as an explicit ideology suggested by particular political actors - journalists and especially editors and regular columnists - often rejected the "clash" discourse. But in the realm of news coverage, things appear to be slightly different. While the project was not able to produce a full analysis of the vast news coverage of the issue, some local reports include this element. Their message points often to another direction as the news constructions of the "event" favoured the violent demonstrations, emphasized the fundamentally different political realities across the divide and offered a lot space to the extremists and their actions. This is often true of news stories, but particularly true of the flow of images. Thus, in the explicitly ideological world of words and concepts, the clash was denied in the opinion genres, in the actual and 'real' world it was confirmed by the evidence offered in the news.

Tentatively we can say that journalism reflects both a surrender and resistance to the 'Huntington syndrome'. But instead of merely saying this is a question of both attitudes being present in journalism, we can suggest how they co-exist in the structure of journalistic discourse. On an explicit, rational and argumentative level journalism struggles against the image of cultural clash. However, on a more implicit, routine and descriptive level journalism appears to base its news criteria and choices of images on a logic that enforces and reproduces the imagined clash of civilizations. In some sense, there is a conflict between more historical and macro-political positions (denying the clash) and a more concrete and micro-level of selective

evidence. This tension is powerfully illustrated by the fact that the editorial pages of Western newspapers, while often carrying reflective and moderate words, also often carried pictures of aggressive and passionate demonstrators, burning flags, etc. The contradictory *doxa* of the journalistic field - on one hand favouring deliberation and on the other looking for extremes - seemed then to be differentiated according to the genres journalism.

It remains to be seen how these two and partly conflicting interpretations of the current world order will shape the way journalism takes stands on the freedom of speech issues. In a pessimistic vein, one can predict that if the discourse of “clash” or “war” gains even more ground as the dominant explanation of the world (in and via the news), then this will favour the more fundamentalist tendencies also in terms of free speech and liberalism.

Professionalism: the role of journalists and the ‘journalistic field’

Yet another common theme surfaces from many of the reports. This has to do with the varieties with which journalism is related to its domestic political culture and system. While at this point we are not able to present any exhaustive typology of the fourteen countries involved, certain key themes and findings can be suggested.

First, it seems relatively clear that in most places it is the structure of the domestic *political field* that sets the boundaries and general tone of the debate. If, (and this often was the case), the political elite favours temperate reactions and virtues of diplomacy, journalism is also caught up in this atmosphere. Indeed, this seems often to be case *at the first stage of the coverage*: many local journalistic reactions in the West were very cautious¹⁸. It is only after the local political actors have had their say that journalism often wakes up in a defence of a more radical liberalism. This could partly be attributed to the “true” nature of journalism surfacing, but it can also be understood sociologically as in the journalistic field, all or most opportunities for underlining the *distinction* between politicians and journalists must be made use of. This is because the symbolic capital of journalism is its ability to represent the audience *better* than the political system.

Second, the structure of any national journalistic field also varies considerably and when we aim at making sense of press reactions we also reveal important factors that constrain the symbolic space in which journalists move. In

some countries (such as Denmark and France) the journalistic field itself is clearly politically structured. Elsewhere (for instance in Canada) it was shaped by a strong legal framework of multiculturalism. In other contexts (such as Russia and China) there are clear signs of state intervention and attempts to control the coverage and the range of meanings the case might provoke both journalists and citizens to debate. Sometimes (for instance in Pakistan) the fact that the readership of newspapers consists of both a diasporic community as well as a ‘local’ community, creates both tensions and openings for journalistic deliberation. And very often, national identity and a shared version of the history of the nation become intertwined in all these relationships (as in Finland and the UK, for instance).

Consequently, one of the obvious lessons of this research project is that if and when we want to make sense of the role of journalism in the shaping of global media events and debates we have to be able to look across and inside national frames and recognise the similarities and differences in the ways that journalistic fields are constructed. This might enable us also to locate and analyse those moments and positions in these fields which potentially enhance the *anti-fundamentalist* tendencies of global journalism. Critical discourses on a “double standard culture” and a steadily growing consciousness of the diasporic world in which we live, are potentially such moments.

Double standards & the diasporic world

Among the many discourses prompted by the cartoons, the figure of the *double standard discourse* as a form of criticizing the opponents was very common. It took various forms in different contexts. In some Eastern countries, one would refer to cases where Western governments applied the law to prohibit cultural or religious expressions, like the French ban on the *hijab* or the Austrian sentencing of Holocaust-denier David Irving to three years in prison. Critical commentators in for example Pakistan would ask how one could punish Irving while no one seemed willing to sanction the caricatures. This discourse seemed to fit a wider political frame in which the “Western” promotion of democracy and freedom was contrasted with the experiences now widely known from Guantanamo, Abu Gh-raib prison and the Israel-Palestine conflict in which the non-recognition of the elected Hamas government as well as the Western leniency to Israel’s non-abiding to numerous UN resolutions were seen as demonstrations of double standards. A variant of this direction of discourse was of course the emphasised fact that the same *Jyllands-Posten*

which had declined to publish some caricatures of Jesus Christ a few years earlier was willing to endorse the publication of the Mohammed caricatures. This critique was mentioned in several countries, also within Denmark itself, as an example of double standards.

On the other hand Western journalists in several countries sometimes referred to the caricatures in Middle Eastern publications, as bordering on, if not being outright anti-semitic. Special attention was drawn also to the Prophet Mohammed, and other religious leaders, as being peaceful persons who would be tolerant and not resort to violence even when provoked. A particularly complex and interesting case of double standards criticism and debate about “hypocrisy” emerged in Israel¹⁹.

A third version of the “double-standard” discourse would occur inside several countries when critics in a given country would blame their government for their way of handling the cartoon crisis, which in some countries, particularly those with oppressive regimes, was seen as a diversion from burning national issues. And linked to this approach was a critique of one’s own government’s handling of religious minorities, which was the case in Pakistan.

Another related discursive approach came from editors publishing the cartoons and thereby challenging those who did not do so and who tried to find a middle position where they defended the right to publish, but simultaneously gave reasons for themselves not doing so.

This is not the place to argue definitively what the existence of a shared formal criteria such as *double standard criticism* means or could come to mean. But it is worth pointing out that irrespective people from the opposite sides of the controversy mobilised a *similar*, formal pattern of argumentation. Thus, with only a mild exaggeration, one can suggest that despite their differences, they agreed on a criterium of discussion according to which it is legitimate and relevant to present criticism about the inconsistency of one’s principles or between one’s principles and actions. To what extent this exemplifies the global norm of a possible global public sphere is far from proven of course but it does suggest a certain shared sense of how *validity* can be questioned.

Another interesting theme in the global debate is the question of *diaspora*. Throughout the crisis its importance and impact were better understood, albeit differently interpreted. From countries in which Islam is the dominant religion one would see arguments directed towards European

leaders (and editors), appealing for them to realise that they were living in a more complex world than previously, and that they had to take that into consideration in their ways of practicing freedom of speech in order to avoid deepening existing divides and conflicts. This concern was also echoed by numerous journalists and politicians in Western countries. It is also important to see that considerations of the diasporic realities were *not* dominated solely by the sense of threat or danger. Commentators often tended to refer to the diaspora as a particularly *vulnerable group* in their respective societies, not least when the level of conflict in the Muslim world exposed random violence and even killings. The argument often emphasized that such an escalation might eventually backfire on the migrants settled in Europe or elsewhere in the Western world.

Various interpretations of the relations between the diaspora in Europe and the anger voiced in the “Non-West” were suggested. Jane Kramer, a celebrated journalist in *the New Yorker*, believed the militant protests in the Arab world had less to do with the caricatures than with the 25 million Muslims living in Western Europe, and she interpreted the protests as a power struggle to control the Islamic diaspora, “or what you call international Islam”. In her reasoning, the diasporas also represent a threat to Islamist forces and regimes in their homelands as a modern, critical Islam among them seemed to gain ground²⁰. Various interpretations of what happened when the delegations of Imams travelled from Denmark to the Middle East may be related to this suggestion which sometimes tacitly omitted the event that may have triggered these travels, namely the Danish Prime Minister’s refusal to meet with a group of diplomats from countries in which Islam is the dominant religion.

On a more general level, several commentators have warned that controversies of this kind may encourage a tendency of withdrawal within certain diasporic groups, funneling more absolutism and antagonism. Others have warned against selling out fundamental freedoms to please obscurantist elements inside the diasporas whose influence might grow if not taken seriously. This very crucial debate of “how to relate” in an increasingly multicultural world has been stimulated by the caricature controversy.

In any case, the cartoon controversy clearly demonstrated how complicated the notions of an ‘implied audience’ is becoming in a globally mediated world. In such a world, one can of course fear that the need to find secure communities of interests creates more and more closed and idiosyncratic enclaves of communication. But the actual

reality of diasporic communities and “over there” being also present “here and now” can also be a potential element in teaching journalism to appreciate its dialogical rather than its chauvinistic heritage.

Final note: apropos Voltaire...

There is a long way to go in our analysis of global media events and flows of information and arguments. But clearly this is a field of growing importance both to international politics in general and media research in particular. Thus our further analysis of the Mohammed cartoon case will try to pick up some of the themes taken up in this introduction and also develop new ones. In order for our conclusions and suggestions to be relevant we invite the reader to offer us feedback and counter-arguments. In an endeavour like this, one quickly becomes aware of the limits of one's own horizon of experience.

In that spirit and perhaps also as a contribution to our continuing dialogue about the legacy of the Enlightenment and freedom we conclude by quoting Voltaire. As for instance John Durham Peters has recently pointed out, it is rather doubtful whether Voltaire ever actually uttered the aphoristically condense sentence that *The Economist* so cleverly twisted at the beginning of this project (Peters 2005: 156-157). However, Voltaire is on the record for writing the following, as a concluding note on a section on “sect” in his dictionary for philosophers:

“A long dispute means both parties are wrong.” (Voltaire 1750/1956, 283)

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- ¹ This was not done to promote the cartoons but to criticize them. The published picture was not the infamous one with a bomb in the turban of the Prophet, but one of a blind-folded warrior-like Prophet with two hijab-clad women trailing behind him.
 - ² For a more detailed account of this and the role of prime minister Rasmussen see the report from Denmark.
 - ³ Estimates have it that approximately 0,5 billion Danish kroner have been lost due to the crisis.
 - ⁴ For quantitative evidence of the “free speech”, frame being activated, see the Swedish report.
 - ⁵ For more details of the events, see the timeline of publication on http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons_controversy.
 - ⁶ For a more detailed and diverse discussion about themes, see particularly the reports from Pakistan.
 - ⁷ The Orientalism critique raised by Said and others is directed against essentialist representation of the Orient (perceived as the Middle East, at times the Muslim world), with characteristics such as the Orient being backward, static, despotic, irrational, incomprehensible and/or sensualist -- and unable to rule itself (thereby underlining a need for intervention). According to Said, it is a representation initially linked to colonial hegemony and later to Western dominance.
 - ⁸ On the other hand, as Buruma and Margalit emphasise, there is not a research tradition in the East for mapping the “West” to parallel the Orientalistic studies of the Western powers
 - ⁹ For an example of the tension between these two (commentaries and news) genres in relation to the “clash” theme see the Finnish report.
 - ¹⁰ The reports from Denmark, France and Finland offer different versions of this perspective.
 - ¹¹ See for instance the reports of Pakistan and Egypt, and also Israel.
 - ¹² In addition to number of articles, the project is planning a book to be published in 2008.
 - ¹³ The survey takes the *individual* as the universal category of departure. This, of course, can be and has been attacked from various perspectives, both inside and outside liberalism. This is not the place to dwell on that criticism, though.
 - ¹⁴ This column takes into account publications of the cartoon by newspapers. It does not include “publication” of the cartoons by “photographic citation”: printing news photos of newspaper that published the cartoons.
 - ¹⁵ In many, if not all, country reports we can see how the national identity actually operates as a part of the discourses: cf. Denmark, Russia, Finland, Norway, France, etc.
 - ¹⁶ This is the position from which the Freedom House survey cited above works from. This is tendency of “homeopathic machismo” of liberalism that John Durham Peters (2005) has written about.
 - ¹⁷ Some variants of multiculturalism might develop to come close to *Occidentalism* (Buruma & Margalit 2005), while others would - even in relation to Western modernity itself - emphasise a more dialogic attitude.
 - ¹⁸ See for instance reports from France, Finland, Sweden and UK.
 - ¹⁹ See the report from Israel for a more detailed discussion.
 - ²⁰ For an outline of (mainly European) press reactions to the caricature controversy around the world, see [signandsight.com](http://print.signandsight.com/features/590.html): (<http://print.signandsight.com/features/590.html>)