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Social Dynamics and Ethics Example

Research Objective:

A quantification of social dynamics and ethics in global society. It is the aim of this project to assess the relative reaction of newspapers and their readers to the publishing of the Muhammad cartoons in various parts of the World. Since the Muhammad cartoons will obviously have generated the most anger in the Middle East and North Africa; we have chosen to ignore those major regions.

The regions we focus on are:

1. The United States of America
2. Great Britain and Europe
3. The Nations of Scandinavia
4. The Left Bank
5. The Indian Sub-Continent
6. The Far East and South-East Asia

The United States and Great Britain, of course, get special mention because of their position as leaders of the Free World / leaders of the War against Terror; and are by implication, leaders of the West who would possibly be (and indeed were) blamed for the publishing of those images (with their flags burned) regardless of their complicity or lack thereof in the publishing of the images (no main stream American or British paper republished the cartoons; and all government officials condemned the publishing of the same as a lack of sensitivity towards the Muslim population of the World.

The Scandinavian countries of course, have been some of the most passive and anti-War in the past; and stood together as a matter of principle on this issue, and we'll see their reactions as well.

The Left Bank to me comprises of the French and Germans; and all liberal forms that were not directly involved in the original conflict. France and Germany were a bit divided, with the ministers in power slowly backtracking and calling for calm; while the newspapers and opposition politicians lambasted the protests and called for their governments to condemn the negative reaction to the printing, as anti-democratic.

We live in India of course, which also happens to have the world's second-largest Muslim population after Indonesia, and it would therefore seem odd to not take into account the views professed here; as also in the region around us. China is an upcoming "Great Power" and is highly influential in Asia, and we have so considered the reactions from the Far East and South-East Asia as well. That answers the "who?" of our paper; but we have not quite covered the "why?" yet.

We said that this is meant to be a quantification of the social dynamics in a Global Society. What does that entail?

Well, a multitude of objects to be honest; all of which are inter-linked, across the realm of the socio-political and the economic. While it is still early in the stage to measure a fall out; we believe that it may be possible to extrapolate on the Raw data we gathered from our content analysis, by which we can posit some possible ramifications for Governments and Businesses alike, and the Press too.

The basic questions we ask ourselves in the analysis, then?

1. What was the nature of the defense / consternation the Press involved itself in with relation to this issue?
2. Was the language used inflammatory, did it attempt towards peacebrokering, did it make a definitive stand?
3. What was the stand that papers took?
4. What was the reaction the public gave to those points of view?

The answers that we found were then funneled to add specific weight to our proposition, to contradict it, or to re-evaluate it.

The Proposition:

That Democracies furnish the Press with certain rights to publish that must not be curbed (the tabloid press is a different matter—it is the mainstream Press we discuss here). That newspapers tend towards biases or political tilts is undoubtedly undeniable, and newspapers must not be open to government censure in the matter of press freedom. While it is imperative that newspapers publish with responsibility to all share-holders; which in the field of Mass Media implies subscribers and second-hand (re-issues, internet) readers.

What we're trying to establish is what negative effects such stories can have upon the circulation of national newspapers and the reaction of the public to them; and on the portrayal of either to the countries they deal with. There are multiple possibilities of where this research could be used—in social dynamics as we mentioned, in assessing press freedom or quantifying media ethics; and also in more basic analyses like the reaction of people to such incidents, (such as the boycotting of Western-made products in many parts of the Muslim world) not even getting to protests involving mass flag and effigy and product burning... We will discuss this further in our conclusions

Subjective Analyses

The United States of America:

From the voyages of Columbus-to the Oregon Trail —to the journey to the Moon itself —history proves that we have never lost by pressing the limits of our frontiers. —George Bush, 20 July 1989 Firstly this starts off with a bit on the Post 9/11 reactions and observation of America's response to the tragic attack on the World Trade Center in September 2001.

There are two principal features of American nationalism, both of which were evident in the response to 9/11. These are, in spirit, to a great extent contradictory but they often run together in American public life. The first is a certain element of American messianism: the belief in America as a 'city on the hill', a light to the nations, which usually takes the form of a belief in the force of America's example. But at particular moments, and especially when America is attacked, it moves from a passive to an active form: the desire to go out and actually turn the world into America, as it were, to convert other countries to democracy, to the American way of life.

In principle, the desire to spread democracy in the world is of course not a bad thing. But there are two huge problems with it. One is that because this element of American messianism is so deeply rooted in American civic nationalism, in what has been called the "American Creed", and in fundamental aspects of America's national identity, it can produce - and after 9/11 did produce - an atmosphere of debate in America which is much more dominated by myth than by any serious look at the reality of the outside world. Myths about American benevolence, myths about America spreading freedom, myths about the rest of the world wanting America to spread freedom, as opposed to listening to what the rest of the world really has to say about American policies.

The second feature that cuts across this American messianism, however, is what can be called the "American antithesis", that is to say, those elements in the American nationalist tradition which actually contradict both American civic nationalism and the American Creed. These elements, which are very strong in parts of America, include national chauvinism, hatred of outsiders, and fear and contempt of the outside world. This is particularly

true in the case of the Muslim world, both because America has been under attack from Muslim terrorists for almost two generations now, but also because of the relationship with Israel, and the way in which pro-Israeli influences here have contributed to demonizing the Muslim world in general.

This results in an incredible situation: on the one hand - and there are here particularly the neo-cons - the Bush administration who want to democratize the Muslim world, while on the other, neo-conservatives do not even bother to hide their contempt for Muslims and Arabs. Sometimes you hear, and even read, phrases like, "The only language that Arabs understand is force," "Let them hate us so long as they fear us" and so on. This is utterly contradictory: people saying they want to democratize the Arab world but displaying utter contempt for Arab public opinion. Of course this is not just a moral failing, or a propaganda failing. It also leads to practical disasters, like the extraordinary belief that you could pretend at least to be introducing democracy, and on the other hand, you could somehow impose Ahmed Chalabi on Iraqis as a pro-American strongman, and that somehow the local population would line up to salute you and happily accept this. The extent to which this is fundamental to the American national identity and is widely believed to keep Americans together means that it is very difficult in this country to challenge these myths. When it comes to the newspapers in the United States there are those which take up a much more liberal stance while there are those that are hard and not targeted but go to the extreme's of the phrase "the land of the free". The one positive point of the country is that when it is said that there is freedom of speech, there is a lot of it, and because of which one has seen, documentaries (although on a single persons mindset) such as Fahrenheit 9/11 which although is extremely, targeting the Bush Administration but also reveals to the world the inner working of the worlds most powerful nation.

In this Write up references taken up were from six American newspapers namely;

- The New York Times
- The Boston Globe
- The Chicago Tribune
- The Washington Post

- The Los Angeles Times
- Newsweek Magazine

In all 18 articles from these newspapers have been analyzed to give out an opinion of what American nationalism is and to what extent is it prevalent in some leading newspapers in the United States of America.

Among the Newspapers taken up and the articles under reference a pattern can be seen that everyone follows each other and that only a few dare to twist the use of words to mention of names of officials and other people of importance. With the current invasion of Iraq and the ever growing resentment against the Americans by the Muslim World a majority of the articles will be based on Iraq, the Middle East, and terrorism and on the Muslim world. Since the attacks on 9/11 America has been in a never ending battle with terrorism, along with allied support from various other countries in the world. But does it justify its actions, the Invasion of Iraq, The bombings in Afghanistan, The claims of nuclear threat, even targeting Saddam Hussein. Is this all truly in the best interest of the world or just a game for the world's most powerful nation. Where millions of people in these areas have lost their lives, damage of property estimated in millions, use of weapons in large quantities, destroying nations.....

Although these steps have already been taken by the U.S. it was now up to the newspapers in the country to report out the activities taking place in the war zone in which their country was playing a major part. As far as one can see, the newspapers do not seem to play a one-sided role or seem to tilt to a particular side but with reports from all angles in the battlefield and the repercussions back home one gets the feel that the newspapers are sensible and have a definite role which is positive in the world today. With a large cloud of disbelief and hatred and disgust looming over the Americans along with the outbursts of the Muslim community, today the American media and that of the world play a vital role in maintaining the stable atmosphere that we have today. The newspapers, one of the most powerful mediums of spreading awareness plays a pivotal role and an extremely delicate role keeping in mind sentiments of the various communities in the world. Seems to me like most people would be able to grasp the difference that being patriotic means loving America, while being nationalistic places

America, which can do no wrong, above other nations. The former is good. It's healthy. It promotes pride in one's nation. The latter, however, is not good. It's very unhealthy. It promotes arrogance to the point of hostility.

Arnold Toynbee once said "Great empires do not die by murder, but suicide." Would one say that it's where the United States is heading?

Europe:

Report: British newspapers and British reactions The cartoon strip published by Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten, depicted the prophet Mohammed with a ticking time bomb for his head sparked widespread protests and violent demonstration across Europe and Asia. The drawings were originally commissioned by Jyllands-Posten from Danish artists after an author could not find an illustrator to depict Mohammed in a biography of the Prophet. The Danish cartoonists submitted a range of images, all banned by Islam, which strictly forbids depictions of the Prophet to avoid encouraging idolatry .One depicts a grinning, knife-wielding Mohammed flanked by two veiled women. Another, which appeared on the front page of Die Welt in Germany, and in La Stampa in Italy, shows the Prophet wearing a bomb-shaped turban, topped by a hissing fuse. The Spanish newspaper ABC used a photograph of the original Danish newspaper, with its 12 cartoons. Die Welt also ran an editorial regretting a decision by the Danish newspaper to apologize for the upset caused. The Jyllands Posten has not apologized but its editor, Carsten Juste, said he would not have printed them "had we known that it would lead to boycotts and Danish lives being endangered".

These episodes of protests and demonstrations have raised heightened debates on the limits that the press should adhere to. And to defend their rights to freedom of expression, some newspapers went ahead and reprinted the inflammatory comic strip. The result was just as expected, with individual rights at loggerheads with the rights of the press, the world watches as the fire spreads slowly yet steadily over different parts of the world. London witnessed some violent protests where people took to the streets and embraced the Al-Qaeda and calling for the beheading of non-believers. Following this reaction, the liberal Muslims, that constitute the majority of the

Muslim population in London, were left aghast and quickly took to the street making clear they were not around to incite mindless violence. The organizers had carefully chosen banners which had simple messages like "united against islamophobia, united against incitement, mercy to mankind and Mohammed, symbol of freedom and honor."

Amongst the crowd were a number of white people who were opposing the sudden rise in violence. A rally held in Trafalgar Square on the 11th of February was backed by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. From among the crowd, a Mrs.Brka said, "if you slap someone once, then okay, but if you slap someone 10 times, they will do something about it." This was in reaction to the reprinting of the comic strip by newspapers across Europe.

Most of the violence that spread across the globe was completely reactionary and most were incited by imams who vehemently preached of the Jihad against the west. The press too held their own in defending their freedom of expression. In France the front page of the France-Soir tabloid carried the headline "Yes, We Have the Right to Caricature God" and a cartoon of Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim and Christian divinities floating on a cloud. Inside, the paper re-ran the Danish drawings. "The appearance of the 12 drawings in the Danish press provoked emotions in the Muslim world because the representation of Allah and his prophet is forbidden," it said. "But because no religious dogma can impose itself on a democratic and secular society, France Soir is publishing the incriminating caricatures."

The protests during the later part of February in London were simply gatherings of Muslims from all over London in a bid for peace and tolerance

Scandinavia:

Report - Scandinavia: Denmark, Norway and Finland In this part of the project we'll try to understand what had happened in Denmark with regards to the drawings on the prophet Mohammed. The problem with the cartoons in its basic form is that an author of a children's book needed drawings for his book, but was afraid to do so because Islamic law prohibits depiction of Muhammad and when the cultural Editor of "Jyllands Posten" got wind

of it he opted to use this as a catalyst for discussing Freedom of Speech and therefore he had a number of artist draw up some cartoons of how they imagined Muhammad.

This did stir up some debate in Denmark but not really that much, except for a few Muslim who felt really offended and tried to get the Danish population to acknowledge their outrage. This however did not happen and therefore they decided to journey to several Muslim countries with a file containing the drawings and several other cartoons of Muhammad which were said to be even more offensive to the typical Muslim, and some might argue that without these added drawings the response would have been less drastic. After having spoke to a number of Danes, Norwegians and a few Finnish people the majority of the consensus was that they didn't want the government to exercise any apologies to the Islam world because as they say in Scandinavia the countries are all about opting for the freedom of speech.

As Michael says "They have a right to their voice - But they don't seem to understand that the Danes have the right of free speech" The problem was that the Danish people do not understand the respect some other people might have towards religion in other parts of the world, since we do not take religion as much more than some traditions and rituals that you go through in life. And some other parts of the world don't understand the Danish pride of having the freedom to say/do whatever they want. Danish people stands very steadfast on the issue of freedom of speech, and will not tolerate that other people interfere with that, just because they were offended by some humorous drawings, which have been seen in many other cases, also with other religious figures. As Kasper Kataoka mentioned in his questionnaire, "We know that Denmark is one of the most open and accepting countries in the world. There are a lot of Muslims and other foreigners living in our country, including myself. So when we see people in some far away country, yelling about Denmark being the devil, being a intolerant country and treating Muslims bad, while they are tramping on our flag, burning buildings and causing all kind of obscene violence... then we lose even more respect."

A real big problem was the role of the Imams, those from Denmark have been traveling around the Muslim world, showcasing homemade pictures with a pig face and a praying Muslim being taken from behind by a dog. These

imams traveled around to cause an upset; long after that the "real" pictures had actually been posted in the papers. Some of the pictures were even published in Egyptian papers long before people started protesting, and nothing happened back then. So what we believe is the reason for the escalation of the whole situation, is that the Muslims might have felt surprised by the western world for some time, and now they suddenly had something they could rally around. If there was an easy answer to this, it would already have been done. But communication is what is needed mostly. The fact that the Danish prime minister turned down a talk with the Muslim ambassadors in the start was a stupid move. Now all who are able to see a bit open on this subject, and is able to do something, should. Talk with people on the "other side" whatever side you are on, try to get some more understanding of why everything is happening, and try to make the people around you understand.

Also the Danish Muslims have a big responsibility to spread out the word to their fellow Muslims, of how the Danish community is. This is already being done it seems.

In Norway things seemed to be a little more different the main newspapers VG and Dagbladet were the ones who showcased these imagery and a quick response from Truls revealed that, " I had no reaction to the cartoon, as they are commonly used in Scandinavia. such drawings are meant to start a discussion, not fighting" This is what is reflected in most of the answers given by the Norwegians in that they all didn't anticipate the level of response that they got. But many feel that there shouldn't have been any sort of apology and that the Norwegian embassies should not have been burnt.

As Truls says "Diplomacy goes before everything to solve problems. Religious leaders who are ignorant and are lacking in knowledge should be replaced". Whereas those present in the chilly areas of Finland hadn't seen it through newspapers since it was never published in any paper. But they did get to see it through the internet sites.

Most of them didn't even care enough to respond well and showed no real signs of interest or wanted to raise their voices. As teemu from Finland says "An apology is an easy thing to do, especially if it solves problems this big. Even if they didn't mean to cause this, you still apologies. Usually you apologies someone when you

accidentally step on their foot or something." That was the extent of their level of co-operation.

So we see that from the study undertaken that the people weren't really interested in knowing what was happening, most of them in Denmark hadn't even seen it in the papers. But many would have gone out of their way to gain some more insight into the whole ordeal.

Many of the youth that I spoke to didn't know what the big fuss was about the drawings and some of the youth in Norway even thought it was like a war between Christians and Muslims. (In their own words: "Islam world vs. Western world") To an extent it would seem arrogant to us the way they responded but as mentioned, they didn't even feel the need to apologize. The newspapers were clearly advocating the freedom of speech and they paraded those values of theirs which they think actually symbolizes Scandinavia. Many of the newspapers in Denmark and Norway felt that they hadn't done much wrong and that the Muslims were overreacting to the whole issue.

Another important note would be that the papers had actually apologized for their work and extended an apology as well, but the Muslims didn't seem to care too much as they wanted the governments to say sorry for the work of a newspaper. If the drawings were indeed meant to induce a discussion then why is it being used to induce violence in people?

France and Germany / Liberal Reactions:

The liberal defends the right to speech, the right to freedom, the right to the freedom of expression above all others. Personal or collective offense is subjective and of lesser importance than the right to air discourse that could degenerate to an offensive level.

Benjamin Franklin once said that societies willing to give up little freedoms for a little more security deserve neither freedom nor security. The newspapers I have referred to in my analysis are:

- Le Monde, France
- Der Spiegel, Germany
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany
- Das Bild, Germany
- The Economist, Great Britain
- The Guardian, Great Britain
- The International Herald Tribune

All newspapers are set in a strongly liberal tradition, and therefore exemplify the debate that perhaps lies at the heart of this misunderstanding and hatred. The West, set in its liberal traditions allows for Press Freedom like the Arab World just does not. Many Arabs found it shocking that Governments in the West cannot control what is published and what isn't by the Press.

What was interesting here, however, were articles carried by "Der Spiegel" which were more sympathetic to the Muslim cause (one should remember, that though France and Germany are more liberal and stringent supporters of journalistic freedom; they hold the largest Muslim populations (France via immigrants from North Africa and Germany via Turkish Immigrants) in Europe.

Mass Media Research

This section will be short for now; as a large part recurs in the final analysis, as the position taken by the Left Bank is largely the view you might associate with this paper as well...

The conclusion will deal with liberal views, the political ramifications of taking a stand on an issue like this; and the economic fallout.

The Indian Sub-Continent:

Times of India Friday, February 10, 2006 On Friday, February 10th 2006 The Times of India published an article attributing United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, who condemned the publication of the controversial Prophet Mohammed cartoons and advocated all steps to be taken to calm down the situation.

He termed the articles as insensitive, offensive and provocative also stating that he was not against freedom of speech or expression.

Sunday, February 12, 2006 This article told the story of the Muslim Protest march in the state capital. Carrying placards and raising anti-US and anti-Denmark slogans, they demanded that the respective governments apologize for hurting the religious sentiments. It was Maulana Sher Mohammed Madrasa Varisaya who interpreted the act as a violation of the religious liberties of believers of God. He demanded the United Nations to intervene and formulate an international law for prohibiting the repetition of any such act.

Monday, February 13, 2006 Police fired tear gas and baton-charged about 7,000 students protesting the Prophet Mohammed cartoons on Monday in northwestern Pakistan. The crowd threw stones at Edwards College, breaking windows and causing other damages at the prestigious school founded by Christian missionaries during British colonial rule.

The article claimed that the Muslims were angry because Islamic tradition bars any depiction of the prophet. Under Pakistani laws, insulting the prophet or Islam's holy book, the Qur'an, can be punished with the death sentence. Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Gunfire and rioting erupted on Wednesday as more than 70,000 people joined Pakistan's biggest protest yet against Prophet Muhammad cartoons, burning movie theaters, a KFC restaurant and a South Korean-run bus station. Three people died and dozens were injured in two cities, police and witnesses said. The rioters ransacked the offices of the Norwegian mobile phone company Telenor, three cinemas and offices of Mobilink — the main

mobile phone operator in the country, witnesses said.

Thursday, February 16, 2006 Tens of thousands of Pakistani Islamists wielding sticks and waving green flags rallied in Karachi against cartoons of Prophet Mohammad on Thursday, the latest in a wave of protests in which five people have died.

A branch of US-based Citibank, and an office of the German company Siemens, hung black flags to mask their logos, as did a Christian hospital and several cinemas on the rally's route.

Saturday, February 18, 2006 At least 11 people died when Libyan police opened fire on demonstrators attempting to storm an Italian consulate during a protest against the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, Italian state television reported. Dozens were injured in the protest outside the Italian consulate in Benghazi, reports said on Friday. All the victims reportedly were Libyans.

Sunday, February 19, 2006 Pakistani authorities arrested more than 100 activists of Islamic Jamaat-e- Islami (JI) and put its chief under house arrest ahead of an anti-cartoon demonstration. The Times of India more or less covered the violent protests that have rocked many parts of the world after the cartoons were reprinted in newspapers in several countries. They have focused mainly on Pakistan, the country which is largely dominated by Muslim population, followers of Islam.

The articles have been solely matter of fact, stating incidences how they have occurred. There have been subtle expressions of sentiments, like the TOI has covered mostly the riots and the arrests of Islamic activists in Pakistan.

Hindustan Times February 10, 2006 The Hindustan Times were deeply alarmed at the repercussions of the publication in Denmark several months ago of insulting caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed and their subsequent re-publication by some other European newspapers and at the violent acts in reaction to them. They stated that anguish in the Muslim world is shared by all individuals and communities who recognize the sensitivity of religious belief.

February 10, 2006 This article gave us a brief about how the cartoons came into being, with the creators being threatened by the Islamic extremists. They also covered from where the article became a case of international conflict. They also spoke about the Danish: Then a group of Danish imams took the cartoons to West Asia. Complaining of press bias, they distributed the drawings — and, some say, fabricated a few of their own to ensure that unrest would be sown. Also stating that the Arab elites got into the game. Then ended as most articles did, on the "victimized" Muslim's side.

February 13, 2006 Vir Sanghvi's candid expression that the silence of liberal Muslims was adding fuel to fire found favor with surfers. Like Sanghvi they chose to sprinkle their argument citing the recent incidents involving the offensive cartoons of the Prophet in Danish newspapers as well as MF Hussein's nude paintings of Mother India.

February 11, 2006 It talked about the latest religion vs. freedom of expression controversy: the fuss over the Danish cartoons that featured the Prophet Mohammed. Vir Sanghvi said "do statements that cause religious offence fall in the same category? To argue that they do, we would have to prove that they caused damage to the safety of the religious faith (the national security parallel) or that they affected the way the faith was perceived by society, or even lowered its standing. But surely none of the people who complain about insults to religion accept that the slights can have these consequences? Is the safety of Islam threatened because a Danish newspaper carries a cartoon? Is Islam so weak a religion that a couple of cartoons can cause the world or society in general to think less of it? Clearly not. So, I'm not sure on what grounds we could abridge the right to free speech when it comes to religion.

If India is not to become a soft state, then we must stand up for liberal principles. We must stand up to the rioters, arrest those who foment violence and never, ever, give in to the blackmail." The Hindustan Times covered both sides of the coin. It gave us a whole idea about how the problem occurred, who was responsible and who instigated the whole process. It gives us both sides of the problems, framing it as mere as a Danish author wanting to publish it in her book.

The Far-East and South-East Asia Major Newspapers in China/Hong Kong The China Daily is an English-language

daily newspaper published in the People's Republic of China. The Communist Party of China-controlled state-run publication has the widest print circulation (200,000 per issue) among Englishlanguage newspapers in the country. The editorial office is in north Beijing, and the newspaper has branch offices in most major cities of China as well as in several foreign capitals.

STANCE:

China Daily was set up in 1985 and several journalists on the new paper supported the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations. . The editor of China Daily, Zhu Ling, told foreign editors that the papers editorial policy was to support the policies of the Communist Party and only to make criticism of authorities if there was deviance from Party policy.

CONTENT ANALYSIS:

There were few editorials on the issue in the Post, which in itself says a lot, which shows how much importance was given to the issue in China/ Hong Kong. Other than the customary report, a certain report is interesting: A top Taliban commander offered a reward of 100 kilograms of gold to anyone who kills the person responsible for "blasphemous" cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed...

This might not be directly indicative, however the inclusion of this article, which was ignored by other newspapers worldwide shows that China is not very pleased at the publication of these cartons. The South China Morning Post (Chinese:????; Cantonese IPA: /n?m11 w? 11 ts?? 35 b?? 33/, Jyutping: naam4 waa4 zou2 bou3; Mandarin Pinyin: nA;n huA; zao bA o) (also referred to as the SCMP) and its Sunday edition, the Sunday Morning Post, is the leading English language newspaper in Hong Kong published by the SCMP Group. The current Group Editor-in-Chief is David Armstrong.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

When compared to other newspapers worldwide, the laidback attitude of this Hong Kong daily is evident: The Hong Kong protests are expected to be peaceful, unlike those that have swept across other parts of the world. So far, more than a dozen people have died as a result of violence stemming from protests. Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria were set on fire by demonstrators.

However though not venomous in his criticism like some other newspapers worldwide, Mr. Ching says: A little common sense would help in this debate. It has long been accepted that freedom of speech is not absolute, and that it is illegal to improperly shout "fire" in a crowded theatre or to incite a crowd to violence. There is also the old saying that your right to swing your arm ends where my nose begins. A rational debate on the sensitive issue of religion is difficult at all times. It is rendered virtually impossible amid heightened tensions resulting from insensitive cartoons that mock other people's religious beliefs. Telling these people that the press has the right to insult them can only make matters worse. In these circumstances, rationality flies out of the window and, all too often, is replaced by violent protests.

He ends the debate by saying that a balance between freedom and restraint are required. Albeit Hongkong is not as vocal and violent in its approach as compared to Malaysia and Indonesia, they took offense to the cartoons, courtesy their strong conservative attitude and legacy. They are ultimately rather critical of the cartoons and stand against freedom of expression unless exercised well.

Major Newspapers in Singapore

The Straits Times is an English-language broadsheet newspaper based in Singapore and owned by the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH), first published on July 15, 1845. It is the oldest newspaper of any kind in Singapore and is the dominant English-language paper of the country, with a circulation of around 400,000 daily.

The Straits Times is the only English-language newspaper with an active Internet forum in Singapore. A separate

edition, The Sunday Times, is published on Sundays. The newsstand price of The Straits Times is S\$0.80.

STANCE:

One serious criticism of The Straits Times is that articles on politics are seen by critics as being biased towards the right-wing ideology of the ruling People's Action Party. This has been due in part to The Newspaper and Printing Presses Act of 1974, which requires all government papers to be publicly listed into both ordinary and management shares, thus ensuring the government gets to decide the composition of the management board. Hence, past chairpersons of Singapore Press Holdings have all been civil servants. Opposition figures are also given little or no press coverage, in terms of interviews or statements. Some say that the paper is merely pro-government or favors only those in power. While this may be argued, there are cases galore to point to this. Cherian George, a journalist and art editor of the paper, has given an insightful description of press workings in Singapore. He stated in a convention conference in 1998 at the University of California, Berkeley that "the PAP power is hegemonic power, in the Gramscian sense: it is a perfect blend of coercion and consent", concluding that "Singapore's newspapers are, at least in part, willing partners, of the state....the PAP did not suppress the press in order to cover up corruption or hide its mistakes. It did so out of a sincere belief that the press as an institution had a narrow and short-term view of the public interest, and that it could obstruct good government. Singapore's press model thus reverses the equation of your First Amendment. Here, the press, seen as the pure expression of democracy, is protected from the government, which, despite having been elected democratically, is assumed automatically by your political culture to have undemocratic tendencies. In the Singapore model, the elected government is the expression of democracy, and it is protected from the press, which is unelected and therefore undemocratic..... "The 'freedom from the press' model does mean that newspapers must operate within much narrower perimeters than their counterparts in most parts of the world. It must accept its subordinate role in society...The tone of stories must be respectful towards the country's leaders. They can be critical, but they cannot ridicule or lampoon.

"Reporters without Borders" has ranked Singapore 147th out of 166 countries in its second annual World Press

Freedom Ranking in 2004. In 2005 Singapore's rating improved somewhat when it was ranked 140th by the same organization. The annual Country Human Rights Report for Singapore in 2004 report by the U.S. State Department has reported that the Singapore government "fostered an atmosphere inimical to free speech and a free press," though it said that there was "limited progress towards greater openness during the year."

CONTENT ANALYSIS:

The Straits Times' coverage of the event is a prime example of the conservativist approach of the newspaper: In an article by John Macbeth, senior reporter simply titled 'Right to publish may not be right thing to do', he says: Jakarta --- Living in Indonesia -- the world's most populous Muslim nation, as we are religiously reminded in almost every wire service story -- it is difficult to understand why a newspaper circulating in the Danish region of Jutland would publish cartoons ridiculing Prophet Muhammad. It all seems such a silly and unnecessary exercise.

Although ridiculing the incident at its seams, he now brings out the issue of responsibility. He goes on to say: While editors in general may feel they have the right to publish what they want in a free society, it may not always be the right thing to do. Too many of them talk about the importance of freedom of the press -- without ever accepting the responsibility that necessarily goes with it. Indeed, in leaning perhaps too far over backwards, they may even be faulted for encouraging extremism.

However this conservative stance suddenly becomes a scathing attack on the media when John Macbeth says: But just as importantly, the Indonesian media must accept a greater measure of responsibility. That applies not only to the content of the newspapers themselves, but also to getting smart about what constitutes libel. In many ways it is both a form of protection for the wrongly maligned -- and for the publication itself.

Again he says: But all this hardly explains the cartoon controversy, which gives new expression to Newton's third law of motion: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

But in the end, newspapers will be newspapers. How else can the Islamic Defenders Front and the rest of the

hardline radical groups explain why after all the uproar over Christians insulting the Prophet, two small Indonesian tabloids would deem it important enough to publish the cartoons, knowing full well it would land them in hot water.

This report is prime proof of the Straits Times critique of how non right wing/ conservative papers can't exercise restraint and in this process, they avoid censorship of details and add fuel to fire in matters which might not be that vital and make mountains out of molehills.

Major newspapers in Indonesia

Java:

Wikipedia says:

East Java supports several regional media outlets. Local newspapers with provincial news reach their readers earlier than their competitors from Jakarta. In the spirit of "providing more news from around readers", most newspapers even issue municipal sections which are different among their distribution areas. Java Pos Group, one of major newspaper group in Indonesia, is based in Surabaya. Surabaya Post is one of historical newspaper that had provincial circulation.

In addition, there are two popular Javanese magazines published in Surabaya: Penyebar Semangat (Spreader of Spirit) is a historical and popular Javanese magazine. Java Baya, the other Javanese magazine which used the name of one of the famous Prabu Java Baya. -Wikipedia

Jakarta:

The Jakarta Post is the best known newspaper of the region. It is a daily and published in English. Local newspapers with provincial news reach their readers earlier than their competitors from Jakarta. In the spirit of "providing more news from around readers", most newspapers even issue municipal sections which are different

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CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPERS

In an editorial, Indonesia's English-language daily, the Jakarta Post, argues that not only are the controversial cartoons satire- ing the Prophet Mohammed in bad taste, but they also militate against free speech. The paper goes as far as suggesting the cartoons - first published in a Danish daily and republished in newspapers in a dozen countries worldwide - are Europe's "weapons of mass destruction."

However the Straits Times of Singapore reports this about Indonesia. They say that the fact that a nation as tiny as Denmark can cause such a stir in Indonesia ('a nation as tiny and far removed as Denmark') was 'shaky', since not too many Indonesians reacted to the matter. This downplay of Denmark can also be seen as demeaning the strength of the nation in population and size when compared to the many islands of Indonesia and it being the nation with the largest Islamic population.

To quote:

"While it is natural for news outlets and people in general to focus on events and dramatic happenings, as we have done here, with the protests, publishing of the cartoons by some newspapers, more protests, Denmark going weak at the knees, and boycotts, it needs to be made clear that in most cases, like this one, nothing has happened for most people, nothing has changed, the cartoons have actually aroused little interest or response from the colossal majority of Indonesian Muslims and the organizers of the demonstrations, mainly fanatical

fringe groups, have failed to muster much of a crowd for any of their events. Out of a population of about 200 million Muslims the biggest demonstration saw 1000 people attend, hardly mass movement stuff. "

The Straits Times while reporting the reactions in Indonesia also said In Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono denounced the cartoons as insensitive. But "as religious people, we should accept the apology extended by the Danish government," he added.

Again the approach is rather pacifist in nature

The Khaleej Times says:

In the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia, about 100 people torched a Danish flag and shouted "God is great!" outside a local parliament building in central Java province, police said While the actions may seem inadequate, when considering a Global picture, one can not ignore the fact that while Indonesian dailies tried to downplay this event in a rather Pacifist approach, the Khaleej Times was blunt and brutal and due to its pro Islamic approach, did not hesitate from mentioning this.

Major Newspapers in Thailand:

Bangkok Post - Circulation is approximately 75,000. Its major shareholders include the Chirativat family (owners of Thailand's largest retailer), the South China Morning Post of Hong Kong and GMM Grammy Pcl, a local media and entertainment firm.

The Nation - Circulation is in the 60,000-80,000 range. It is the flagship publication of the Nation Multimedia Group. Maintains a progressive editorial line. Thai Day - Circulation is somewhere in the 5,000-10,000 range. Distributed as an insert in copies of the International Herald Tribune sold in Thailand. Owned by the Manager Media Group

CONTENT ANALYSIS:

An article by senior reporter Kelly B Collison of 'the Nation' says: The cartoons are, in the words of Tim Benson, head of an international association of political cartoonists, "in very poor taste." An understatement. The most contentious one depicts Mohammed in a turban shaped as a bomb. Another (which I personally find more offensive), depicts three suicide bombers marching into heaven, with Mohammed crying out, "Stop, we've run out of virgins." Kelly is outright in calling the cartoons malicious and vengeful.

He quotes a friend of his who says:

"The newspaper," he says, "has been a medium for anti-Muslim slander for so many years that it cannot claim to have been held hostage; its project last September was just the culmination." Although demonstrations in Thailand weren't as vociferous as with other parts of the world, the attack on the cartoons is most vengeful here. Collison almost makes it seem like anti-Islamic propaganda. Doubt our words? The article ends with- "Blow up Denmark."

Malaysia

Again the Straits Times of Malaysia, while reporting the incident said Leaders of Muslim nations in Asia denounced the caricatures, the prime minister of Malaysia, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, said the publication of the cartoons showed a "blatant disregard for Islamic sensitivities over the use of such images, which are particularly insulting and forbidden by Islam." But in a written statement, he urged Malaysians to stay calm.

The Khaleej Times provides a nice insight into the psyche of the Malaysian Government

In an interview with The Associated Press, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi offered his country, Malaysia, as the venue for an annual international meeting of Muslim and Western leaders to promote understanding and reduce tensions. "I fear that this feeling towards Islam is deteriorating today, and that is a very sad thing," said Abdullah, who is

Malaysia's prime minister as well as the current chairman of the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference. "We never know where it's going to lead to unless all of us resolve to stop it and do something about it," he told the AP.

While this may seem a rather conservative approach, it is more pacifist than conservative actually.

The Khaleej Times says:

In the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia, about 100 people torched a Danish flag and shouted "God is great!" outside a local parliament building in central Java province, police said.

Abdullah, whose multicultural country is considered a shining example of a moderate Muslim-majority democracy, said Western perceptions of Muslims were being warped by too much media coverage of Islamic extremists. The best example of the Pacifist nature of the govt. was shown by. Abdullah said the damage caused by the caricatures to relations between the West and Islam is not irrevocable--"We must not allow us to believe that nothing can be done to stop it, nothing can be done to create ... a new sense of mutual confidence," he said.

Developing a Meta-Narrative

What is clear after the American and British invasion of Iraq; is that any slight against Islam—malicious or humorous is very probably going to be viewed with a certain amount of consternation by the Muslim populations of the World. There certainly are major sensitivities that need to be taken into account—on both sides, and in arguments like this, there can never be a winner. The 21st century was meant to be a post-modern century—where we are collectively defined by incredulity towards the meta-narrative. But even incredulity towards the meta-narrative is a meta-narrative in itself—the objective state of a subjective existence.

Why do this project? Because mass media is a reflection of society; and in a world moving apart, this project is meant to postulate guidelines for governments, businesses and the media in the public mainstream that could

perhaps cause fewer such issues.

In terms of effects; we will consider the following:

Goodwill: Goodwill is once again a subjective idea, but the collective consciousness, even though it is a simple majority rather than consensus-based tends to reflect certain trends in society. The American Newspapers attempted to keep out of the debate, and the British and American press all worked to soothe tensions rather than stoking the fires any more than necessary. Their flags however were still burnt—a reflection no doubt, of Muslim discontent with them over Iraq and a host of other issues. The British Press also largely tried to soothe the public, apart from one paper which featured "hard-talk" by a local police officer threatening vigorous police action against any protestor looking for a fight.

The French papers were originally filled with statements we can only describe as "reasonable" by Nicholas Sarkozy, the Interior Minister; calling for the Freedom of Press, but also the respect of the sensitivities of the Muslim Public. Jacques Chirac, the French President however retracted on this government position a few days later, condemning the publishing of cartoons.

In Germany, the Chancellor Angela Merkel called for calm and Press Freedom and denounced riots in other parts of the world as criminal acts rather than religious ones.

The Scandinavian response was to hold to their rights of Press Freedom, as many papers in Europe republished the cartoons as a show of solidarity. In India the public reaction was largely delayed, and more due to a fatwa declared by a leader looking to generate votes rather than due to personal offense suffered. Pakistan too had a delayed response and was very likely anti-Government forces sensing an opportunity to wreak havoc.

Indian editors did mostly take the side of the liberal and the freedom to publish over public-sensitivity (when in a two-way face-off) but still called for calm heads and cooler minds.

The Far-East and Asia were different in that they were more or less united in denouncement of the West. China didn't give much importance to the issue, although the stance was anti-west. Hong Kong acted non-committal, even though it adopted an anti-west stance. Malaysia denounced the caricatures although they (the public) was advised not to react. Singapore was highly vocal about exercising freedom of free speech responsibly. Indonesia tried to undermine Denmark and its side, although the reports were Pacifist in nature, so as not to stir up communal tensions. A reporter in Thailand echoed the sentiments of the masses there by saying "Blow up Denmark."

In retrospect, the newspapers of the region were highly critical of the cartoons. Although the intensity of the disapproval differed from newspaper to newspaper....the overall impact was that of a certain anti-west sentiment shared by all the nations.

All the newspapers in the Eastern Asian region rubbished the long standing free press claim:

"All in the name of liberty"

Coming together almost as one entity, all the newspapers of this region expressed their concern for the lack of restraint shown by newspapers worldwide and the absence of any regard for religious sentiments. Economic Fall-Out: as a PR or Advertising situation (crises come and go, but commerce goes on...) due to the public sentiment quite obviously displayed in many parts of the world in the burning of Danish goods or Western Flags, or the storming and torching of their embassies; it can't be particularly good for the companies who sell their products in these parts of the World. While heavy machinery and automotive companies should not be affected, there is expected to be a drop in the sale of western FMCG products in the Middle East and Far East. The meta-narrative we're looking for, then; is a solution to stabilize business in the area. This steps from the realm of the content analysis into that of practical applications, which also implies that we need to make some perhaps brave extrapolations on our part.

What the Content Analysis told us is:

1. Western Governments stood largely for Freedom of Speech and Expression, and if they did not say so directly, it was because of other mitigating circumstances
2. Many Islamic countries are still undeveloped in the idea of democracy and critique and the people fail to recognize the lack of control Western Governments have over their Press in the West
3. Islamic Nations themselves called for calm (no one really wants to destabilize the already volatile Middle-East any more, besides Iran, maybe.)
4. Economics can be largely affected, and in the moment of anger, the West is perceived as one by many; with no difference between any of them.
5. The nature of the protests and violence was mob-related rather than actual offense of religious sentiment—the ones who were truly offended to have reacted in more calm but active ways, in terms of public condemnation, and letters to the editors of their newspapers—silent protests, if you will...

Conclusion

What then, do we take from those 5 points? The lessons we learn paint a broad canvas (which was the intention to begin with) Where do we go from here? Well, we propose a solution that is based on the nature of economics and trade rather than "re-education" or any other technique. It is only through active engagement (to use Ronald Reagan's phrase) of all nations—not via economic incentives, but by improving the quality of life—therefore not completely profit-driven but goodwill-driven economic engagement of the non- Western Allied nations can Global stability be achieved in any form. The West has a lot of work to do and a long road ahead—short-term economic viability should come second to developing the economies of nations to handle future spending.

The aim of this paper was about using MMR as a tool to gauge where the World is today, and where we are heading. We believe we have given enough of a gist about both those ideas. The ball now lies in the Court of Policy-Makers across the World; and the World does stand at an uneasy balance today—in a Cold Waresque manner. We are interlinked by a catastrophic imaginary today; and to hope, to live in the future implies acting upon it now.

Sources

World Newspapers, Online Editions

Some of the major ones:

1. The New York Times
2. The Los Angeles Times
3. The Washington Post
4. Chicago Tribune
5. Boston Globe
6. Newsweek
7. Time
8. The Economist
9. The Guardian
10. Der Spiegel
11. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
12. Le Monde
13. Turin Sunomat
14. Das Bild
15. Jakarta Post
16. Straits Times
17. South China Morning Post