

# REPRESENTING of CARTOON CRISIS in TURKISH PRESS: SAMPLES of VAKİT, CUMHURİYET and POSTA DAİLİES\*

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## Özet

Bu çalışma 30 Eylül 2006 yılında Danimarka Gazetesi Jyllands-Posten'da Hz. Muhammed'i (S.A.V) aşağılayan 12 karikatürün yayınlanmasıyla ortaya çıkan karikatür krizini içermektedir. Peygamber Hz. Muhammed'i aşağılayan bu karikatürler müslümanların tepkisini çekti. Müslümanların tepkisi üzerine Avrupa'da birkaç ülke gazetesi bu karikatürleri ifade özgürlüğü kapsamında değerlendirip gazetelerinde yayınladı ve kriz derinleşti. Türkiye kendisini Batı ve Doğu arasında köprü olarak ifade eden bir ülkedir. Hem laik hem modern aynı zamanda da Müslüman bir ülkedir. Bu çerçevede karikatür krizi Türk basınına nasıl yansımıştır? Bu çalışmada radikal İslamcı bir gazete olarak bilinen Vakit Gazetesi, Türkiye'nin en çok satan gazetesi olan Posta ve laiklik bakış açısıyla haber yapan Cumhuriyet gazeteleri örneklem olarak alınmıştır. Bu gazetelerin 20 Eylül 2006 ve 30 Mart 2007 tarihleri arasında karikatür krizi sürecinde yayınlanan haberler analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar Mohammed Arkoun'un radikal, geleneksel ve reformist olarak ifade ettiği İslama olan bakış açıları noktasında yorumlanmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Karikatür krizi, ifade özgürlüğü, Türk medyasında İslam

## Abstract

This paper is included analyzes of caricature crisis news in Turkish press On 30-9- 2006, Danish Newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons mocking Prophet Mohammed (pbuh). The repercussions of these offensive caricatures are big in the Muslim world and people. Because of insulting caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed and their subsequent republication by some other European newspapers and at the violent acts that have occurred in reaction to them. Turkey expresses yourself is a bridge in West and East. It is also secular and modern but in the same manner a traditional Muslim country. In this frame how have Turkish press approached caricature crisis? In these studies Turkish newspapers Vakit which is known as Radical Islamic Daily, Posta, which is the bestseller daily, and Cumhuriyet which is known secular standpoint are sample. The news included caricature crisis in these newspapers published between 30th September 2006 and 30 March 2007 is analyzed. Results are commented in the view of Mohammed Arkoun's perspective to Islam: radical, traditional and reformist.

**Keywords:** cartoon crisis, freedom of press, Islam in Turkish media

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### **Cartoon Crisis Background**

In early September 2005, Flemming Rose, the culture editor for a right-of-center Danish newspaper, commissioned over 30 Danish cartoonists to submit caricatures of the Islamic prophet Mohammed that he could print in his paper, *Jyllands-Posten*. On 30 September a Danish newspaper of a circulation of a little more than 150,000 copies, the *Jyllands Posten*, published 12 caricatures of the Prophet. Ten of them are innocuous, but the two others may be considered dubious: in one the Prophet is shown with a knife in his hand, and in the second his turban is transformed into a time-bomb.

Rose had recently become concerned that European media organizations were self-censoring themselves with regard to issues sensitive to Islam, and was worried that the principles of freedom of speech were under attack. On September 30, with the intent of “pushing back self-imposed limits on expression that seemed to be closing in tighter,” Rose published twelve cartoons depicting the Islamic prophet Mohammed, images that are considered blasphemous by followers of Islam (Power & Arsenault, 2006, p. 1) After this Muslim society in Denmark protest the , *Jyllands-Posten* peacefully. 3,500 protestors organized in Copenhagen to non-violently protest the cartoons, calling for a formal apology from the paper. *Jyllands-Posten's* editors refused, and tensions escalated. On October 20, eleven ambassadors from Muslim-majority countries asked to meet Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to discuss the government's reactions to the publication of the cartoons. Prime Minister Rasmussen declined to meet the ambassadors and pointed out the principles Danish democracy and its rules, freedom of speech. Outraged by the Prime Minister's refusal to meet, Abu Laban, an imam living in Denmark, initiated a campaign to bring international attention to the issue. He contacted the Organization of Islamic Faith and organized a group of Muslims that would tour the Middle East presenting and criticizing the cartoons. Religious leaders, politicians, and journalists in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria, public outcry quickly grew.

Reactions locally came immediately, as some Danish Muslims felt insulted. Then the protest spread Muslim society all over the world. Two problems in fact were encountered: those who oppose publication maintain that the representation of the Prophet (as any representation of the human form) is forbidden by the Muslim religion (as it is in Judaism). In addition, the drawings were perceived by some as an attack on their religion. We have noted that only two could be perceived as insulting, but what of the matter of the representation of the Prophet? The majority opinion of doctors of Islamic law is clear: representation is indeed forbidden. Though while a majority opinion, the view is not unanimous. In past times there existed currents of Islam in which paintings, engravings and drawing representing Mohammad were tolerated, and even commissioned by rulers (Moniquet, 2006)

On January 30, 2006, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Arab League jointly called for a UN resolution, backed by possible sanctions. The political firestorm escalated when in response to the debate, numerous publications around Europe began republishing the cartoons in addition to several new, and perhaps more offensive, images. (Power & Arsenault, 2006, p. 2)

As Western diplomats and media industries in the West paused to debate the free-speech implications of the cartoon debate, what began as a public diplomacy crisis for Denmark quickly spread to negatively affect images of countries such as Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. At the height of the crisis in February 2006, Muslims around the world took to the streets in sometimes violent protest. This led to protests across the Muslim world, some of which escalated into violence more than 100 deaths, altogether including setting fire to the Norwegian and Danish Embassies in Syria, and the storming of European buildings and desecration of the Danish and German flags in Gaza City. While a number of Muslim leaders called for protesters to remain peaceful, other radical Muslim leaders across the globe, including Mahmoud al-Zahar of Hamas, issued death threats. Groups, primarily in the western world counter-responded with support of the Danish policies, including "Buy Danish" campaigns and other displays of support for free speech in Denmark. Some critics of the cartoons described them as Islamophobic or racist, (Qidwai, 2006) and argue that they are blasphemous to people of the Muslim faith, intended to humiliate a Danish minority, or are a manifestation of ignorance about the history of western imperialism, from colonialism to the current conflicts in the Middle East. (Dabashi, 2006) Supporters said that the cartoons have illustrated an important issue in a period of Islamist terrorism and that their publication is a legitimate exercise of the right of free speech. They also claim that similar cartoons about other religions are frequently printed, arguing that the followers of Islam were not targeted in a discriminatory way (Economist, 2006)

During the crisis clash of civilization and Xenophobia to Islamic society are talked. The crisis confirmed the continuing popularity of Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" theory, which posits an ongoing existential conflict driven not by politics or economics but by cultural and civilisational differences, the primary manifestation of which is the confrontation between the West and Islam. This view became particularly popular after September 11, 2001, and has been accompanied by the argument that Islam and democracy are incompatible because democracy is the product of a certain culture defined in religious and ethnic terms, is not compatible with the political values of the Islamic world and is further threatened by immigrants from that part of the world (EuroMeSCo Annual Report 2006, 2007 May).

How does Europe see the Islamic countries and Muslims? To answer this is significant and it is about Idea of Europe. The debate has focused on the political and cultural adaptability of immigrants from other cultures values, and on the effects on the national identities of those countries. This restrictive concept of national identity is the ideological platform of the new xenophobia. The new appeal to an old Idea of Europe is dangerous on two counts in the context of the rise of a social world of increasing multicultural and multi-ethnic belonging. First the murmur of a war of crusade between Islam and the secular West arising out of the debris of 11 September, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq, is forging a Eurocentric imaginary of a world split into two camps: a West seen to be peace-loving and civilized because of its Enlightenment and Christian humanist values and an East seen to be bellicose and infantile or irresponsible because of its religious zealotry and tribal behaviour (Amin, 2004)

### **Methodology**

The data for this study include news from three Turkish newspapers: Vakit, Posta, Cumhuriyet. Because this is a case study with a focus on the cartoon crisis, the study examines all news on the subject appearing from on 1st February 2006 to 11th February 2006. This is the period of increasing the protest against to cartoons. And during the protests many people died. Vakit, Posta, Cumhuriyet were selected for a number of reasons. In this study Turkish newspaper Vakit which is known as Radical Islamic Daily; Posta, which is the bestseller daily; and Cumhuriyet which is known secular standpoint are selected. The study sets out to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What can be revealed concerning the extent and/or amount of processing effort that readers are required to invest in uncovering presupposed knowledge and constructing meaning from given news discourse?
2. Is it possible to discern any ideological reasons behind the use of some presuppositions?

In order to make an informed analysis and provide answers to these questions a theory of discourse analysis.

Van Dijk points out that newsmaking processes (which he treats as discourse processing and social cognition) and news structures are integrated and mutually dependent properties of news discourse. Our efforts to analyse the processes involved in the production of news discourses and their structures will ultimately derive their relevance from our insights into the consequences, effects or functions for readers in different social contexts, which obviously leads us to the consideration of news comprehension (Van Dijk, 1988). In producing and presenting a given news story, the journalist is always engaged in an attempt to modify the audience's knowledge in some ways. This obviously makes it imperative for journalists to know or

at least make assumptions as to the extent of their audience's knowledge on the issue they are reporting (Bekalu, 2006).

In this study I have tried to explain Turkey's view to cartoon crisis by three different newspapers which had different ideology. Turkey's position is significant because of its status. During the crisis in the international area Turkey tried to be a middleman in the Cartoon Conflict. Turkey occupies a unique position among nations -- halfway between East and West. In the current row over Mohammed caricatures, which have outraged the Muslim world, Turkey could take on an important mediating role. Turkey can certainly have a moderating effect on Islamic countries to which it has close economic and political ties. That's why in this paper to understand the Turkey's standpoint is important.

### Finding and Interpretation

Newspapers represent their news according to their ideologies. The ideology of newspapers have seen in their news as discourse. Mills (Monareng, 2005) said that about this, "Speech or writing seen from the point of view of the belief etc. constitute a way of looking at the world, an organization or representation of experience-ideology in the non-pejorative sense".

Cartoon crisis is issued 5429 times in Turkey during 2006 on radio, television and press (Medya Takip Merkezi, 2007). In this study samples are consist of Vakit, Posta and Cumhuriyet. Between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2006 228 news were published in these newspapers. Background knowledge was given all newspaper. Background knowledge maintains the strategy of stereotype the news. The strategy was applied all newspaper. When it seen the news sources except about internal affairs, It came from western news agencies. To depend on the foreign especially the west news agencies, it affected the news discourse.

**Table 1: According to newspapers the number of news**

Place of news	Vakit	Cumhuriyet	Posta
Headline/First page	16	5	10
Inside	121	38	38
Total	137	43	48

According to newspaper the number of news is seen the most news about cartoon crisis in Vakit Daily. 137 news is in Vakit, 43 news is in Cumhuriyet, 48 news is in Posta Daily. On the first page of Vakit there are 16 news and headlines. Cumhuriyet has 5, Posta has 10 headline and news on the first page.

**Table 2: According to newspaper the number of news tone**

News tone	Vakit	Cumhuriyet	Posta
Objective	14	17	2
Negative	49	11	28
Positive	75	15	18

Vakit Daily has used negative and hard speech in the news especially to express the cartoon crisis' background and process. The word "Gavur" perceived to be an abuse in Turkey, is widely used in the headlines of this newspaper with the statements like "Arrogant West", "Double Faced West". Vakit has used positive tone on the news which is about protest and boycott. The community who made protest demonstration is quoted active speech in the news. "Muslim brotherhood" is stressed very often. Vakit Daily has a policy against the AKP (Justice and Development Party) that's why the news which about government's approach prevents to increase crisis is objective tone.

The news is negative tone in Cumhuriyet Daily is usually about violence in the protest demonstration. Cumhuriyet Daily is known policy against the European Union. The attitudes of EU is in cartoon crisis are quoted negative tone. There are no active sentences in the news in Cumhuriyet. All the sentences are passive like "The cartoons is protested" This strategy is regard to protest on abroad. The protest demonstration in Turkey is not seen positive. It against the demonstration in Turkey and showed this in its headline like "This is the Sheri'a show" Positive tone new in Cumhuriyet is about dialog to between West and East. Negating sight about "clash of civilization" thesis and criticizing violence in protest demonstration has a positive tone on the Cumhuriyet Daily.

Posta Daily pressed negative tone their news which about Western countries who published the cartoon and not to apologize. The protest demonstration and the boycott in Islamic countries are in the news positive tone. Posta Daily has often criticized the Western countries which published the cartoons. Posta Daily has quoted Turkey's dialog effort between West and East. These news tone are positive. "On the pretext of speech of freedom" is the Posta's news very often. The news sentences in Posta Daily are passive. Reaction that came from official source are positive tone but the protest demonstration in Turkey is negative tone. It was showed Sheri'a show.

**Table 3: According to newspaper the number of key words**

Keywords	Daily		
	Vakit	Cumhuriyet	Posta
Clash of Civilization	16	14	9
Freedom of speech	117	64	37
Insulting Prophet	345	29	71
Insolent Western	100	4	8
Muslim Brotherhood	32	5	5

Xenophobia	57	45	9
Protest/boycott	214	58	55
Dialog	26	29	13
Apologize	68	27	29

#### **Headlines of Vakit**

Giaours were damned 3 February 2006 Headline

Reaction to giaour not stop 5 February 2006 Page 6

Muhammad's community is reactive 11 February 2006 Headline

Apologize is not enough 1 February 2006 Headline

Insolent daily is stranded 10 February 2006 Page 6

As seen on the Table 3 each newspaper have given place to cartoon crisis their ideological perspective. Vakit has stressed "Giaour" "double face West" "Muslim Brotherhood". It has come from Vakit's perspective and position. This newspaper ideology is Islamic ideology and their reaction to cartoon of prophet Muhammad is very sharp.

#### **Headlines of Cumhuriyet**

Putin called to apologize 9 February 2006 page 11

Double steps from Turkey 11 February 2006 page 1<sup>st</sup> page

Protest shade into the Sheri'a demonstration 11 February 2006 page 8

Ambassadors were burned 5 February 2006 page 10

Dangerous polarization 3 February 2006 page 10

Crisis mobilization 8 February 1<sup>st</sup> page

Cumhuriyet Daily has a secular position it against the publish cartoon but they also support the freedom of speech. It can be understood on the Table 3. Cumhuriyet has stressed dialog and xenophobia. Cumhuriyet daily has not seen the cartoon against the Islam, It has thought is about xenophobia. That's why it has stressed it. It showed that Cumhuriyet's ideology, secular and against the EU.

#### **Headlines of Posta Daily**

We are claimant 7 February 2006 1<sup>st</sup> page

West remembered discretion 7 February 2006 Page 12

This is hypocrisy 9 February 2006 1<sup>st</sup> page

Cartoon crisis is increasing 2 February 2006 page 12

Cartoon fire 5 February 2006 1<sup>st</sup> page

Anger is increasing 4 February 2006 1<sup>st</sup> page

Blasphemy was tradition! 10 February 2006 page 12

Posta has a middle position on this issue considering Vakit and Cumhuriyet. It can be said Vakit's perspective is radical, Cumhuriyet's is reformist because of its secular standpoint Posta's is traditional like a Islamic tendencies on the earth. It can be seen a historical perspective of Islam.

Looking at the historicity of the answers proposed, one could outline three main tendencies in the formulation and implementation of models of Islamic authority. Crudely, these schemes could be called traditionalist, reformist and radical (Volpi & Tuner, 2007, s. 14) The radical perspective, embodied in Mohammed Arkoun's (cited by Volpi & Tuner, 2007) writings, challenges the very foundations of the corpus of religious knowledge that has been accumulated since the emergence of Islam as a world religion. It puts into question not only the individuals and institutions currently posing as Islamic authorities, but also the very reasons and processes that make them authorities on Islam. The reformist perspective, illustrated by Azzam Tamimi's (cited by Volpi & Turner, 2007) contribution, is undoubtedly the most difficult approach to pin down with precision, as it is always in danger of backsliding into either a traditionalist argument or a revolutionist proposal. The reformist case, which is most relevant in the current debate about democracy in the Muslim world, is a self-reflective argument emphasizing that some but not all of the reasons and institutions that justify traditional forms of Islamic authority ought to be revised. In contemporary settings, the main challenge is to identify the role that democracy can play in fostering the multiple Islamic revivals that have been witnessed in most parts of the Muslim world over the last decades.

The traditionalist perspective, outlined here by Robert Gleave's and Baudouin Dupret's (cited by Volpi & Turner, 2007) contributions, is readily embodied in the everyday deliberations of, for example, the Shi'a clergy in relation to the institutionalization of a political leadership in Iraq, or Egyptian judges in relation to the normative-legal application of positive and religious jurisprudence. In both cases, however, the notion of 'Islamic tradition' is consistently revised through practice at every step of the way.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is included representation of Turkish press perspective during cartoon crisis. First it could be tried to explain contents of news. Then to analysis the news discourses by the way of discourse analysis. As being seen in the news reproduction to ideology according to main ideology. It can be seen to point of view of Turkish towards West. West appear the intolerances and have xenophobia from Turkey. West have a prejudice about Eastern and Islam and Muslim society. It is important to make one thing clear at the outset: we read and hear more and more often that this matter of the caricatures is a sign of the reality of a "clash of civilisations". Newspapers which they studied in this research emphasize the important of Civilisational Dialogue. Such projects cannot hope to succeed in bringing people closer together if their starting point is that the people in dialogue are coming from different international positions defined in civilisational terms not least because this does not reflect reality. Instead it internalises



the fundamental premises of the Huntington argument even as it tries to confront it. The consequence is that its prescriptions are essentially irrelevant to resolve the problem it addresses. This show that the position of Turkey.

The main opinion on Turkish press on the pretext of speech of freedom West show their intolerances to the Muslims. This caricature should be criticised for making a non-existent link between terrorism and the Muslim religion, in a context of increasing intolerance. But it is not acceptable to submit the freedom of the press and of caricature to the subjective interpretations of the content of a drawing. Turkish press show their reaction to the caricatures but also defend to their position of secular. They point to freedom of religion and some threats. That is a major threat to fundamental liberties at risk from religious demands. They express to respect of religion and prophets and also they emphasize the secular life in society. In this meanwhile it can be said the government ideology is reproduction.

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