

# European Caricatures of Immigrants and their Ideological Loads as Determinants of Power Relations

## A Critical discourse Analysis Approach

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*The symbolic hegemony that stems from the problem of social production and the proliferation of social class structures since Bourdieu and Althusser has attempted to understand the social structure and the continuity of the social stratification wherein the interests of the majority and those who represent the lower class are conflicting. In Europe, the failure of the proletarian revolution has made ideology more and more central in the explanation of the reasons behind the continued stability of western capitalism despite the world wars and the great depression. The two great concepts “hegemony” and “ideology” remain key factors in the frameworks of consciousness and intellectuality. This has contributed in deepening and broadening the sociological understanding of symbolic authority, power and power relations; by identifying the material and non-mental elements in the dynamics of symbolic power mechanisms.*

**Key words:** *Ideology. Power. Power Relations. Immigrants. Caricatures. Europe. The west*

### 0. Introduction

Critical Discourse Analysis, as a research tool, deals with the various social issues on the basis that it considers discourse a social phenomenon making language a starting point for analyzing the power and dominance. CDA stems from the idea that power and dominance are produced, used and treated in language and via language. Language formulates the society and the culture and it is formulated through them. Language, according to CDA, is not innocent as it is formulated according to the thought of its producer. Language varies according to the embedded intentions of the sender and the impact he wants to conduct on the receiver. Therefore, in the same discourse the producer can exaggerate, complicate or simplify things. Consequently, discourse is referred to in CDA as a social act and understanding it requires exploring the implicit and explicit relations between language and the sociopolitical structures wherein it evolves and that it represents.

Besides, CDA considers discourse as a changing historical truth. Language in CDA is an influential social act that fulfills some ideological goals. Therefore, perception and conscious bridge the gap between the text/ discourse and the world/ society. Ideology, power, history and critic are the fundamental bases of CDA. The connection between social psychology and discourse analysis, as two different but related disciplines, clearly revealed the cognitive dimension that characterized the work of Wodak and Van Dijk throughout their career. That was displayed in the introduction to the issue of *Text* related to the Third International Conference on Language and Social Psychology as well as the conference about Discourse & Racism in 1987. They asserted that *“Discourse analysis has become sophisticated enough to allow a significant contribution to the analysis*

*of serious problems, such as the dominance and inequality inherent in racism. This is but one of the many directions a critical discourse analysis may (and in our view, should) take in the years ahead*". (Van Dijk & Wodak, 1988 a: 4) So, in the mid 1980s the larger dimensions of critical discourse analysis were traced by the three authorities: Fairlough (1985) and Van Dijk 1986 Racism and the press as well as Wodak (1986) Language Behavior in Therapy Group. They made of power and ideology a starting point for their researches and publication.

Wodak suggests four basic concepts for any critical discourse analysis: "**Four concepts figure indispensably in all CDA: the concepts of critique, power, history, and ideology**"(2007: 209). These concepts are employed by the specialists in CDA in dealing with issues like dominance, injustice, gender differentiation, social classes etc. Van Dijk (2001) also claims that these concepts are important because of the nature of topics and the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis.

On another hand, the relationships between social groups are still governed by some ideologies and relations of power that are manifested in different forms. Media are influential factors in the incarnation of these ideologies, defending some and/ or refuting others. TV, newspapers, magazines and radio stations contribute in the production of the collective opinion and they are governed by the ideologies of the politicians and decision makers. Thus, they play an important role in framing, shaping and directing the public opinion.

A quick overview of the historical reasons underlying the production of caricature as a revolutionary model proves that it has reached a level of containment to the extent that analyzing a painting implies addressing a group of factors including the cartoonist, the publisher, the recipient audience, the social structure, and the historical era through which the painting was produced. Since its appearance, caricature has merged with a variety of genres that form a force aligning with the pulse of society.

Caricature confirms the problematic and suspicious relationship between art and authority. Since its emergence, caricature carried the seeds of liberation of the artist from the subordination of the artist to the power of money and politics. Thus, caricaturing underlined its dedication as an art that has a large audience background and a great impact on people. The caricaturists' mission, that draws its legitimacy and strength from the popular background, became more and more oriented to mobilization, education, sensitizing and criticizing. Caricaturing benefited from the public's increasing interest in political and social life and it became more oriented to show exaggeration and distortion. Moreover, it focused on the reality and on events rather than on individuals.

Consequently, special interest arose from the political authority in this art to the extent that some cartoonists began cooperating with politicians and decision-makers in promoting the policies intended to guide the people and leading them to accept, confirm and coexist with some decisions and attitudes. Caricaturists started portraying some national symbols, as did Thomas Nast who created the initial form of Uncle Sam, which was repainted later in 1917 in its familiar form by artist James Montgomery Flagg.

The First World War was a turning stage in the function of caricature. At that time the world witnessed the emergence of political propaganda offices, and their coverage of the conflict in the various warring countries. And that was marked with a change in the job of a cartoonist whose role used to be restricted to criticizing government institutions, the army, and the church, to become an agent of propaganda. Caricaturists later fell into great confusion whether they should pursue their criticism of state policies, or engage in the national defense.

Nevertheless, many factors stand as authoritarian in front of the caricaturists and their right to freedom of expression. These barriers include political, religious and societal factors related to customs and conventions.

Thus appeared the red lines as the holocaust, which has always been considered forbidden to be approached. Similarly, mocking the sacred Christian symbols was always considered immoral. And this is going to be confirmed later with the debate raised by the Danish cartoons that were considered offensive to the Muslims sacred identity.

Therefore, caricature acquired power and had a great authority as a means of expression. Caricature became associated with power and became a means of perpetuating some ideologies and power relations in society. The caricatures became loaded with messages and are driven by the vision and attitudes of some parties that mean establishing some norms in society. For this reason we will restrict this article to explain the embedded ideologies of caricatures about immigrants and how they contribute in creating and supporting some power relations between immigrants and the host communities.

The media landscape has witnessed great changes, which were manifested in the variety of tools used to convey messages. Such variety has obviously affected the content and the way it is received by the audience. Political cartoons are one of the media tools used to convey political messages and they have been great markers of ideologies. Caricatures are based on specific ideologies and they aim at expressing the embedded messages and the ideologies hidden between the lines and they are very influential in terms of both the content and the delivery.

### **I. Ideology in Critical Discourse Analysis:**

The concept “ideology” has undergone different uses since it was first coined by Destutt De Tracy in 1776. Napoleon Bonaparte, Marx and Althusser used the term ideology before the scholars of CDA do. Pêcheux, Van Dijk, Fairclough, Wodak and Billig went further than analyzing the surface level of ideology. Rather, they were concerned with the daily beliefs that determine discourse.

Ideology is the concept or set of concepts embedded in what people say or write. It refers to the set of beliefs and values shared by a group of people. Fowler insists that language is a means of restructuring ideologies *“language is not a clear window, but a refracting, structuring medium.”* (Fowler in Richardson: 2004: 53). These shared beliefs and values are represented by language and they are used to create some relations between the different groups of society namely the dominating and dominated ones. According to Fairclough and Wodak ideologies are *“ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation.”*(1997: 275)

Ideology is one of the basic concepts in Critical Discourse Analysis and it occupies an important position in the analysis of the different discourses. It is a set of idea or beliefs that individuals or groups of people hold. These ideas are closely related to the awareness and the consciousness of people and they are like intermediaries between the language and the surrounding world. Fairclough considers ideologies to be *“constructions of reality ... which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination”*. (1992: 87)

One of the basic objectives of analyzing discourse critically is to show the embedded ideologies of discourses. The researchers in CDA benefit from the great contributions of the social theory about ideology namely with Louis Althusser (1918- 1990) who claimed that individuals have a fake awareness of their reality and this prevents them from perceiving the true nature of their social and economic situation. This hinders their attempt to call for their rights. Besides Antonio Gramsci spoke about dominance and consensus are two fundamental concepts to ideology. He claims that modern societies are not controlled by force; rather they are dominated by some frames and patterns that are shared by individuals within a given society. Moreover, the

aim of ideology is to **“organize human masses and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position and struggle”** (Gramsci 1971:160).

Critical discourse analysis aims at revealing the embedded ideologies that are manifested in language. These ideologies are expressed through language and they are built into practices. Hence, they are manifestations of the relations of power and control within a society. That is to say ideologies are **“assumptions which are built into practices which sustain relations of domination, usually in a covert way.”** (Fairclough: 2004: 112). Practitioners in Critical discourse Analysis have built on the above basis in analyzing the discourses and they aimed at showing the embedded ideologies of discourses calling. Fairclough insisted on the role of languages in constructing ideologies and he claims that texts are basically loaded to the extent that **“meanings are produced through interpretations of texts”** (1992: 89). He explains the interrelationships between language and society on the basis of an of power and ideology which justifies critical aim of CDA: **“language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power.”** (Fairclough, 1989: 12)

Van Dijk connects critical discourse analysis with the dimensions of power abuse and inequality of discourse: **“we shall simply, and perhaps naively, summarize such criteria by saying that in our opinion CDA should deal primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it.”** (1993:252) He considers ideologies to be important worldviews that contribute in the construction of the social cognition: **“schematically organized complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world, e.g. the schema ... whites have about blacks’** (1993b: 258).

Critical Discourse Analysts call for questioning and reconsidering these ideologies in discourse. They don't stop at the surface level of ideology as we stated above; but they deal with the deeply hidden aspects of ideology that are related to people's everyday beliefs. CDA is concerned with the mental representations of different phenomena that are to be interpreted within the social and cultural background of these societies. Providing clear analysis to the texts and discourses that are ideologically embedded is a duty of the scholars because neglecting the critical aspect of analyzing discourses risks them to reproduce the ideologies of the language. Fairclough insisted on this point stating that, **“unless the analyst differentiates ideology from knowledge, i.e. unless s/he is aware of the ideological dimensions of discourse, the chances are that s/he will be unconsciously implicated in the reproduction of ideologies, much as the lay subject is.”** (1985: 755)

Notwithstanding, insisting on the importance of analyzing ideologies does not imply that the analysis is for the sake of revealing and understanding their social effect only but also and primarily for enacting a change in society because they do not represent society: **“Ideologies are often false or ungrounded construction of society.”** (Fairclough &Wodak: 1997:275) She also considers ideologies to be a vision to reality from one side perspective and that they are shared by members of a group to enact unbalanced power relations via discourse: **“From the point of view of the DHA, ideology is defined as an (often) one-sided perspective or worldview composed of related mental representations, convictions, opinions, attitudes, and evaluations. Ideologies are shared by members of specific social groups. Ideologies serve as an important means of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations through discourse”** (Wodak 2015: 4)

## II. Ideology in Caricatural Discourse

Investigating political cartoons dealing with immigrants in some influential European newspapers and magazines (paper and online ones) shows that they target different issues related to a specific category of immigrants each time. In some cases, the caricature is gender oriented; depicting Arab and Muslim men and/ or women. In others, the subject matter of the caricature is the migration trip itself, while some other caricatures deal with religion as a differentiating point of the immigrants' identity etc. Immigrants in general and Islam as a marker of these Arabs who move to live in European countries are commonly classified within the generalized

stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims that date to many centuries ago: **“More recently, images of Islam have been shaped by the perception that Islamic culture represses women, encourages intolerant fundamentalism (a term that was originally associated with a twentieth-century Protestant movement in favor of literal Bible interpretation), and incites terrorism.”** (Nathan et al. 2004: 9) For these reasons, analyzing caricatures about immigrants should be conducted through the analysis of the different categories their subjects fall into. Therefore, they can be broadly classified into six main categories: the migration journey, politics, religion, women and children’s right, sex and social issues and everyday behavior. But in our article, we are more concerned with the issues where ideologies seem to be in conflict and more and new power relations are being established through the drawings.

The image and the context are two main factors that enable an understanding of the subject matter portrayed by the drawing. The caricature creates satire through parodying the reality (individuals or events) in a particular context and this is conducted in different ways such as exaggerating some features in artistic ways.

The attitudes of the world leaders, including Arab and Muslim ones, towards immigration and the immigrants’ issue are widely depicted in caricature. They have represented a considerable data when criticizing how these immigrants die in the sea while leaders show no interest. Leaders are depicted in many cartoons as being responsible for the crisis and they are accused by carelessness and irresponsibility towards immigrants. Below (Figure 1) is a cartoon that is very specific in its relationship to reality that it maintains with history, time, wars etc.



Figure 1

This caricature depicts two European leaders in an unbalanced gambling scene: the French ex-president François Hollande playing cards with the German chancellor Angela Merkel. Refugees and immigrants, most of them are head covered women and men with beards and turbans carrying their luggage and kids, are the stake in the game. Merkel seems to have more (immigrants) near her while Hollande apparently has only one single family. Similarly, he holds only one card; and Merkel is still holding many cards. Moreover, Hollande is depicted with big bulging eyes and red cheeks. Both of them are sweating and François Hollande is holding a handkerchief and drying his sweat. With a big “F”, the caricature is entitled Full and an accompanying linguistic message over Merkel’s head saying (Heu!... Je bluffais!) meaning I am bluffing and one above Hollande’s picture stating (Oh! Puree! Je préfère!); Oh I wish!

The above caricature is loaded with ideological connotations that are related to the time and place dimensions. First of all, the repository of this caricature is the citizen who constructs its meanings: (German and French) everyone engages in the reception of this caricature of multiple skills such as the vision of the world, the perception of human values have become a game of vulgar language between two political leaders of two European powers. The choice of the two countries is very meaningful and hints at the two socio-economic and political movements: socialism of France and the nationalist socialism of Germany. The position as well as the language and the visual icons of the cartoon state that the migration crisis exposes and unveils the fake figure of the French socialism and the republic's motto Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. The caricature favors Germany's human aspect namely in the immigration crisis.

The two short sentences accompanying this caricature are loaded with ideological-political connotations: First the interjections HEU !!!!! then Merkel's first person pronoun "I" in (JE BLEUFFAIS! I am bluffing) implies that her words lack truth and credibility. There is a sort of stupidity and absence of seriousness that characterizes the discourse of political decision-makers namely when it comes to the lives of men, women, children and old men. The lives of thousands of people become a card game for some leaders. The same interpretation for Holland when using the first person pronoun "I" in (Je préfère I wish) implying that he wishes Merkel was just bluffing because he is unable to fulfill his promises towards the immigrants. His words describe the hypocritical socialism of which the French republic keeps only the label. Hollande who seems to have lost all his cards is in fact fantasizing about the serious decisions he is unable to take. His wish is that Merkel would be incredible as he is already incredible. She is still holding many cards and she has lots of problems as well in reference to the elections that were going on then. On the contrary, Hollande was unable even to run for the second term of elections in France.

The interjection "OH! PUREE!" is an informal jargon, which does not fit the situation as it comes from a person who does not have the concepts to deliver a coherent and humane discourse on an alarming situation, which has raised a great political and controversial problem.

European caricatures insist on showing the Arab Muslim leaders in the same position as European ones in the degree of carelessness, inhumanity and irresponsibility towards immigrants. Below is a caricature by the Dutch cartoonist Joep Bertrams about Greece Turkey EU and refugees.

The Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan is shown in a Ping-Pong game while he is shooting a woman with her baby towards Europe. Turkey is playing a political game with Europe through its representative Greece, as the rackets show, and he seems to be in a position of attacking. The sport circuit is divided into two halves with Barbed wires.



Figure 2

The caricature above puts Turkey and Europe in the same position in front of their responsibility towards immigrants. Both parties are treating immigrants as a game; a political game. While Turkey is expelling; pushing immigrants with all his force and his facial expressions show the degree of anger and the great efforts he is doing to push the lady and her baby, the European continent does not seem to be receiving them. The Greek player is in the other side of the stadium letting the lady and her baby fall in the other side. Neither turkey nor Europe seem receiving the immigrant woman and baby who are about falling on the dangerous iron fences on the borders. In this caricature, Turkey with its Islamic background is being attacked more in the immigrants and refugees' crisis namely that the lady shot is in Islamic attire and she refers to the Syrian refugees. The blond lady who refers to Europe in general is helpless in front of the immigrants' attacks from turkey borders and this is a way of blaming the Arab and Muslim countries for the migration crisis in Europe.

The western view to the Arab world and the Arab Muslim identity has not changed since the first contact between the two cultures and civilizations. The Arabs and Muslims are still referred to within the same frames of the first ages of contact between the two civilizations. As is the case in cinema and literature, caricaturists also tend to reproduce the same image of the Arab Muslim men and women, for instance, within the same stereotypical frames wherein the males are depicted via some abusive images such as the pagan, savage, rapist, kidnapper, fundamentalist and terrorist. Similarly, the Arab and Muslim woman is presented as a sexualized belly dancer, a sexual fascination object, harem and now a terrorist whose mission is to give birth to terrorists and satisfy their endless sexual thirst. These images are referring to the same thing and caricatures are only changing labels in order to fit the historical context while the negative connotations are the same. These

static representations of the Arab and Muslim immigrants in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century represent a sort of projection from the history of the western sense of superiority dating back to the colonial era. Caricatures of this century are merely a continuity of the static stereotyped image of the west towards the east.

European caricatures do present Arabs and Muslims issues through their western European context and ideology. This ideology has a premeditated conception of the Arabs and Muslims as inherent fanaticist, fundamentalist, unreasoning and violent. Arabs and Muslims are automatically and instantly suspected even though they are not involved in some terrorist acts. For instance the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the term terrorism was used during the investigation and the whole act was everywhere described as a terrorist attack conducted by a terrorist who wanted to spread terrorism etc. The terrorism character of the event continued until the detention of the real attacker who was simply the American Citizen Alfred P. Murrah. It was proved that he was neither Arab nor Muslim. It is then that the word terrorism was replaced by the term offense. And all media replaced terrorism by violence, offence and similar light depictions.

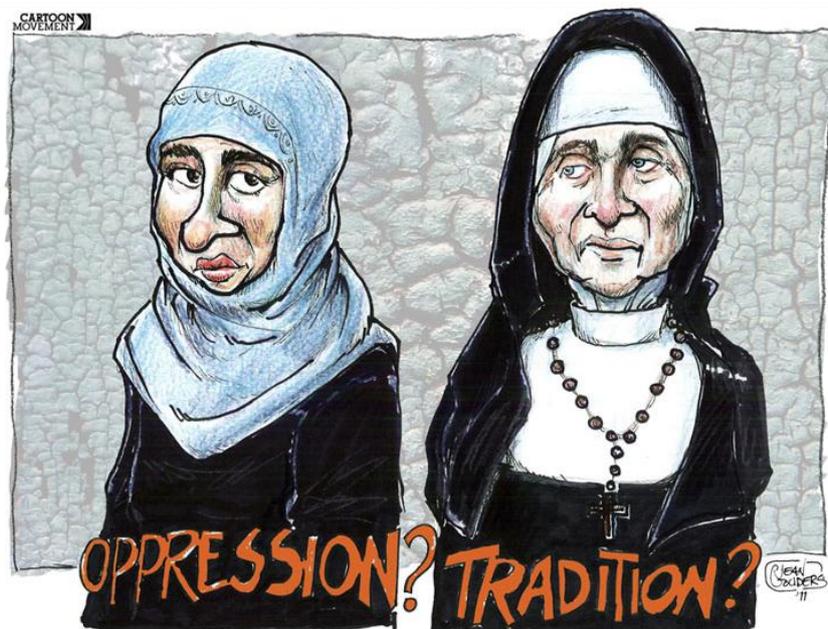
The Arab and Muslim immigrants have gone through a variety of issues that have been interpreted beyond the literal meaning of the conflict between the host and the guests' culture. Beside other issues, the immigrant women and their freedom of clothing have raised lots of controversies. The burkini ban and the anti-hijab campaigns are standpoints of the conflict between the east and the west; the Arab-Muslim ideology and the European one. When France decided to ban the Islamic swimming suit (burkini), it was argued that the aim is to protect the Muslim woman from the injustice of the patriarchal social customs. Yet, as Terrence G. Peterson called it: *"These sorts of statements are a way to police what is French and what is not French,"* (Cited in Amanda Taub in The New York Times 2016)<sup>1</sup>. In fact, it is a matter of identity that is nurtured by the terrorist attacks. This identity issue, incarnated in the Hijab and Burqa as well as burkini, dates back to the colonial period when the veil was taken as a symbol of backwardness and idiocy compared to the European standard dress of Europe that stands for superiority. It is all a matter of identity as explains Taub (2016) *"The veil remained a potent symbol of difference as colonialism collapsed after World War II and Muslims from colonized countries flocked to France. But now, that difference was within a country trying to sort out its own postcolonial identity."* (Ibid)

The ideological differentiation between Europe and the other is historically embedded in the western superiority not only through colonization campaigns as was the case in France, Italy and Spain but also in Germany wherein the Nazi ideology played an important role in tightening the formulation of its fanatical nationalist ideas by focusing on the "other" Jewish. In Germany, nationalism was defined as a return to race in the sense that the Nazis viewed themselves as the protector of the nation- pure race. Consequently, the "other" cannot belong to the national group, regardless of all the efforts made to reach cultural integration. This inherent sense of purity and superiority kept being manifested in the German relationship with the other race including Jews and the Arabs and Muslims who immigrate in Germany: *"What was new about the late 19th-century variant of Jew hatred was its anchoring in the notion of "race." A secular concept grounded in modernity's striving toward rational classification, the idea of "race" gave Jews an immutable biological destiny. All of this was connected to the project of nationalism, with the champions of anti-Semitism seeing themselves, first and foremost, as guardians of the ethnically pure nation-state. Given their racial difference, Jews could never belong to this national community, no matter their strivings for cultural assimilation. Jews, in other*

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/19/world/europe/frances-burkini-bans-are-about-more-than-religion-or-clothing.html?\\_r=1](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/19/world/europe/frances-burkini-bans-are-about-more-than-religion-or-clothing.html?_r=1) (Last retrieved March 10th, 2020)

*words, could never become German (or French, or English, etc.).*” (Bunzl 2005: 502). The same thing is being reproduced with the Arabs and Muslims immigrants who are considered “others” even if they were of the second or third generations born and raised on European countries.

Another stance that reinforces this notion of superiority are the double standards of Europe concerning the freedom of wearing clothes. The caricature below summarized the binary of attitudes in the west between the Islamic veil and the Christian or Jewish head cover.



**Figure 3**

As the caricaturist commented on the above image; “We run the risk of applying a double standard in Europe, a standard where everything Muslim is oppressive and wrong, while everything Christian or Jewish is part of the European tradition and history.”

The case of the caricatures about the prophet Mohamed in the Danish newspaper is another flagrant example of interest, political ideology and power of directing International public opinion about the issue. It is a gross example of guiding the Muslim as well as the European public opinion in understanding and interpreting the intended message of the cartoons and the whole issue.

The historical context wherein the Danish liberal- conservative alliance managed to replace the socio-democrats, who had monopolized the political scene for 80 years, reveals the nature of the alliance and its ideology based on privatization and liberal openness that was new to Danish people. An emergent need to shift the interest of the public opinion from the social issues and shedding light on new issues was a smart strategy by the politicians and the media in Denmark. Hence, immigrants/ foreigners were a suitable scapegoat to open a new front of discussion on media and among people.

The Dual rhetoric of the Jyllands-Posten newspaper and the Prime Minister Rasmussen as far as the freedom of expression is concerned emphasizes the double attitudes towards immigrants in general and in the cartoon affairs in specific. The same prime minister who refused meeting Muslim ambassadors to discuss the cartoons crisis under the pretext of having no control over freedom of speech was the first to strongly condemn

the news that a Pakistani political party offered a reward to anyone who can assassinate any of the cartoonists of the prophet which proved to be only a rumor. He had also supported the newspaper in March 2002 when it was reproached by the Danish Press Council for violating the professional ethics when exposing the ethnic origins of some people involved in a criminal case.

Freedom of speech or freedom of expression comes among the fundamental human rights as it is preserved in article 19 of the Universal declaration of Human rights. It is a fundamental component for democracy and all peoples and governments are required to protect the right of expression both online and offline. Freedom of speech is basic and it serves as a catalyst to other rights and to it are connected many rights such as freedom of information, speech, press etc. it should not be referred to as a derivative right; rather it is a right that really guarantees all the other rights. Freedom of expression is compulsory for social, political as well as economic growth of nations in the sense that the flow of information ensures innovation and supports accountability and transparency. So people and institutions are free to express their opinions, ideas and attitudes towards all that happens around them. If freedom of expression is censored, trust is altered between the different stakeholders and this would never contribute in the development of nations socially and economically.

Media are largely concerned with the liberty of expression as the UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova said ***“Journalism thrives when media is free and independent, when journalists are safe to report, when impunity is the exception,”***<sup>2</sup>. Yet, freedom of expression comes at the intersection between what is legal and what is ethical. Freedom of expression is and should never be a license to incite hatred and racist messages as said the ex-UN General-Secretary, Kofi Annan. In the global world, information flow is limited neither by national borders nor by the language specificity. This is more correct when it is related to pictures: the image language is universal as it can be read and interpreted by everyone and everywhere. Sometime hate speech is implicitly passed under the pretext of freedom of expression. Media sometimes do promote hate speech through reporting the political discourse, which is filled with xenophobia, racism and intolerance against some peoples or minorities in a particular society. That is why most countries that preserve the freedom of expression have also passed some laws and regulations criminalizing hate speech. Lots of chapters of the criminal code of many countries consider the dissemination of hate speech, racism, xenophobia and blasphemy a crime that should be punished for.

In Denmark for example freedom of expression is granted by the Danish constitution Grundloven and exactly in section 77 wherein freedom of expression is determined as ***“Any person shall be at liberty to publish their ideas in print, in writing, and in speech, subject to their being held responsible in a court of law. Censorship and other preventive measures shall never again be introduced.”***<sup>3</sup> Yet in the Danish criminal code, exactly in section 140, blasphemy is prohibited and ***“Any person who, in public, ridicules or insults the dogmas or worship of any lawfully existing religious community in this country shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding four months.”*** Moreover, the same code condemns any offender who provokes violence and hatred speech among others with a fine or prison. The Danish law is very clear as far as hate speech is concerned: it criminalizes any sort of dissemination of information threatening or insulting people on their religions and beliefs among others. Section 266 b states that any person ***“who, publicly or with the intention of wider dissemination, makes a statement or imparts other information by which a group of people are threatened, insulted or degraded on account of their race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, or sexual inclination shall be liable to a fine or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two years.”***<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>[https://en.unesco.org/70years/freedom\\_of\\_expression](https://en.unesco.org/70years/freedom_of_expression) 258

<sup>3</sup>The Criminal Code Order No. 909 of September 27, 2005, as amended by Act Nos. 1389 and 1400 of December 21, 2005

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

It's clear that the legal supports against hate speech, xenophobia, racism and blasphemy in Denmark, as in many European countries, is very rich and clear in terms of punishment and classifications of the violations. Besides, the Danish Media Liability Act of 1991 created the so-called "*journalism ethics*" which contains a set of civil and criminal mandates to which media discourse must be consistent. The Danish Press Council is allowed to punish violators with fines and imprisonment but that was not the case with the Jyllands-Posten whose caricatures were full of hatred, accusation and xenophobia.

In its annual report on Denmark, the European Commission against Racial Discrimination expressed great concern about the prevalence of hate speech, xenophobia and intolerance regarding minorities. "*The general climate has continued to deteriorate in Denmark, with some politicians and parts of the media constantly projecting a negative image of minority groups in general and Muslims in particular.*" (3rd report. December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005:4)

Despite the big echoes and the violence that followed the Danish caricatures about the prophet of Islam, many other newspapers and magazines, on top of which the French newspaper France Soir then Charlie Hebdo, re-published the same cartoons loud-mouthing the right of expression and the freedom of speech. The cartoons issue revealed that there was a sort of collusion from different parties in Europe: the media, politicians, journalists and ordinary people who adopted the attitudes of the caricaturists.

The debate was cleverly oriented and the whole issue was carefully structured so that the different parties would excite each other. The editor-in-chief of the widely distributed Danish daily newspaper had lots of difficulties decorating a book for children but he easily succeeded in publishing these cartoons that are not definitely aimed at children.

Flemming Rose, who was in charge of the cultural Corner of the newspaper, was responsible of the alleged cartoons competition. He identifies himself as a Zionist Jew and he supports all the claims that the Jyllands-Posten advocates Nazism and fascism since the thirties and forties. Flemming was a great supporter of the anti-Islam theorist Daniel Pipes with his notorious quote "*All Muslims are not Terrorists but all Terrorists are Muslims*" (2006: 1)<sup>5</sup>

Many observers claim that the cartoon crisis was avoidable if the prime minister of Denmark wished but as it was not serving his political interests. He exploited the cartoons issue in supporting his strategy of deepening the gap between civilizations and heightening the intensity of tensions in order to strengthen the position of his political party internally and on the international level. It is true that the Danish economy was affected by the boycott of the Arab Muslim world and it registered huge financial losses which were minor compared to their political and ideological gains.

The international public opinion and media divided between those who see the publication of these drawings very normal and those who consider them provocative and hatred filled. Most of the European press circles considered the caricatures about the prophet of Islam intended to embody the principle of intellectual and journalistic freedom in Western societies rather than any hatred or offense. On the other hand, a large segment of Arabs and Muslims as well as secular people found the caricatures loaded with provocation and xenophobia from Islam and its sanctities. The surprising side of the issue is that the west has celebrated the anti-Muslim caricatures not on the basis that they defended freedom of speech but because they approve the content of these cartoons despite being filled with hatred and xenophobia. Defending freedom of speech is the pretext used in the west to attack an individual or a marginalized group, as is the case of Arab and Muslim immigrants in Europe.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.danielpipes.org/comments/69868> (last retrieved on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021)

In light of this congested situation media managed to widen the gap between the two parts, which were already far apart from each other. Supporters of each side conducted some pressure on the other: the Islamic communities all over the world contested the caricatures even if they are deeply convinced that they do not represent Islam. They are all aware that Islam is a religion of tolerance, peace and love. They know that the prophet was a pioneer in dialogue and communication with his enemies before his supporters. Moreover, we are all certain that the drawings were not reflecting the prophet, as they were ugly. The prophet Mohamed was ranked second good-looking person after the prophet Joseph. On the other hand, the western media continued supporting the Danish newspaper not from the principle of defending the caricatures per se or from the significance and content they carry, but rather from the principle of defending intellectual freedom and the liberty of expression. Nevertheless, the biased depictions of the European caricatures of immigrants emphasizing the negative other have become markers of media reporting about immigrants in general claiming the freedom of expression. Mazid concluded that the controversy made by these caricatures *“epitomises the struggle for control over discourse in that the debate is not overtly about anything other than the extent and limits of freedom of expression”* (2008: 35).

The debate then shifted to whether the caricatures issue is a matter of clash of civilizations or a struggle for liberties. Many parties from both sides renewed the old debate about cultural clash and the war of civilizations while some media stand in the middle, as was the case of the Spanish newspaper "El Pais" which warned against the exaggeration of criticism and despising as it expressed its support to the intellectual freedom of expression. The issue was ambiguous: if the west considers criticizing a religion normal and inoffensive, wouldn't discriminating against practitioners of a particular religion and people affiliating to it racist and offensive! It is for sure as is the case of Arab and Muslim immigrants in Europe.

It is worth claiming that the caricatures' issue was a culture, civilization and ideology issue in essence. The Arab Muslim doctrines, that strictly forbid sculpture and any form of photography depicting religious symbols namely prophets, was in confrontation with the west where no taboos and no limits should stop in the way of freedom of expression including prophets and the companions. The debate was again directed and presented as if the Arabs and Muslims are attempting to impose their vision on the west despite the cultural differences. Yet, the real problem is not with the caricatures per se but with the way they present and draw the personalities. In fact, the Muslims rejected not the caricatures of the prophet, but the connection between the prophet, who was depicted with a turban that produced a bomb, and terrorism.

The same contradiction can be found in different media in the west. For instance, the French Charlie Hebdo is known for its biting satire. It basically targets governments, politicians and basically religion. The magazine tends to tackle a variety of topics and issues. The background of Charlie Hebdo and the artists' ideologies and orientation make of its drawings controversial. Charlie Hebdo is a magazine that is sort of specialized in mocking institutions especially religion. It has specialized in mocking Islam and as its staff always claims, their objective is to commodify Islam in the same manner as Christianity. The magazine defines itself in its website<sup>6</sup>, as follows:

*“Charlie Hebdo is a punch in the face.... Against those who try to stop us thinking, against those who fear imagination, against those who don't like us to laugh. Charlie Hebdo is an angry magazine, a paper that takes the piss. ... It's a gazette of the grotesque – because that's what so much of life and politics is... Charlie Hebdo has no need of God, nor any need of Wall Street. Charlie doesn't need two cars and three cellphones to be happy. To be happy, Charlie Hebdo draws, writes, interviews, ponders and laughs at everything on this earth which is ridiculous, giggles at all that is absurd or preposterous in life; which is to say - very nearly everything... ”*

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<sup>6</sup>[www.charliehebdo.fr/en/](http://www.charliehebdo.fr/en/)

Charlie's satire is based on challenging taboos and offending under the label of "freedom of speech". It represents a tradition of satire that dates early in the French media. And about its mission, Libby Nelson wrote in the Vox Magazine, *"The magazine made fun of prominent politicians, religion, and pop culture, but it lampooned Islam and Islamic extremists with particular zeal."*<sup>7</sup> It is widely blamed for being racist, islamophobic and it encourages hatred, homophobia and sexism. Most of its caricatures focus on the aspects of the Arab Muslim society, which represent their identity. These aspects are negatively considered and they include issues of the oppression of women, domestic violence, forced marriage, mandatory veiling and burqua. The cartoons shed special lights on phenomena such as the stoning of girls accused of adultery, homosexuality and gays rights... these phenomena are decontextualized and being discussed from a European point of view that undervalues the Arab Muslim identity and cultural specificity.

Nevertheless, the issue is more than caricatures about a person or a group of people. It encompasses politics, ideology and mainly economy. The great trick of Charlie Hebdo is that it markets a thought that it is attacked because it targets religions. And it raises the emblem that it is making no limits to religious critics. Gerard Biard, the editor in chief who survived the attack, expresses his refusal of changing the policy of Charlie Hebdo claiming that, *"If we say to religion, 'You are untouchable,' we're fucked."* But the problem is that it is not criticizing religion in general but Islam in particular.

France Soir was the first that dared to republish the cartoon about the crisis. This daily newspaper, which was then in the process of bankruptcy, was the subject of big struggles between a group of capitalists seeking to buy it and the journalists working in it and who had the final say about its fate. These journalists were working under the aegis of ArcadiGaydamak *"a Russian-born French-Israeli businessman, philanthropist, and President of the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia (KEROOR)."* (Wikipedia). He was also the head of the "Beitar" (militia of the Israeli Likud Party) and the football club of the same name (Beitar). He was a candidate for the mayor of Jerusalem and he had legal issues against him on charges of evading his tax duties. He used to hide his identity as long as possible by issuing international arrest warrant against him on charges of evading his tax duties.

Likewise, the chronology of popularity of Charlie Hebdo shows that reprinting the Danish Caricatures represent a turning point in the life of the magazine (fame, tracking and sales). It has obtained more focus after the murder of 12 of its staff in Paris. Before 2011 the magazine was not very popular and it had only 50.000 issues as circulation compared to 500.000 issues for its rival Le Canard Enchaîné. It was even about to go bankrupt. However, with the issue "guest-edited" by the Prophet Mohammed ("100 lashes if you don't die of laughter"), and the attacks to its office in 2011, it planned to raise its print from one million to three millions to five millions copies of the same issue: *"The normal print run of 60,000 was extended to five million - a week after Islamist gunmen murdered 12 people at the magazine's offices and five others in subsequent attacks in Paris"* (BBC News website)<sup>8</sup>

For all these contradictions between the official version of the caricatures issue and the implications we stated, we can assume neither the Danish the newspaper nor the French one published the cartoons to free Danish book artists or the French caricaturists from painstaking self-censorship, but rather as an important component of a broad campaign to incite hatred and xenophobia. And that has never been innocent as it always goes in the direction of supporting some ideologies and visions of some politicians or journalists.

As a matter of fact, the economical motives nurtured by the political interest and ideologies are strong factors for redirecting the cartoons issue. The same concepts and the same depictions were repeated in different

<sup>7</sup>Libby Nelson. <https://www.vox.com/2015/1/7/7511001/charlie-hebdo-attack-paris>. Jan 7, 2015,

<sup>8</sup><https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30808284> (Last Retrieved February 23rd, 2020)

issues such as the Hijab controversy in Europe. In 2016, the Italian designer Dolce & Gabbana announced the New Line of Hijab and Abayas for Muslim woman and it was a step of the international brand to embrace hijab and abaya through launching a set of images of glamorous Muslim women draped in silky robes ornamented with bright scarves signed D&G. The debut line was basically targeting wealthy Muslim females namely those from the Middle East. The event was widely covered in international media and the co-founder of D&G Stefano Gabbana used the hashtag #dgabaya in his Instagram account. Not only the media that supported the fashion line but also those who were against it found in it a good topic to attack the Muslim woman and the Islamic clothing.

In the blog of Le Monde newspaper and on his social media pages, the French caricaturist Plantu published a cartoon entitled “Dolce & Gabbana Launches a collection of Hidjabs” (Dolce & Gabbana Lances une collection de hidjabs). In this caricature, Plantu shows two fashionable ladies, apparently Muslim women wearing Hijab. They are taking gasses and each one is holding a fashionable bag. One of them is wearing a belt of explosive that is commonly used by the jihadists in their terrorist attacks. One of them is asking the other “when will the fashion belt be out?” (A quand la fashion ceinture?)



Figure 4

The cartoon was largely criticized as being Islamophobic. It was considered disgraceful, shameful and disappointing as it was seen targeting Muslim women when connecting them to terrorists and terrorism. The cartoon came in a time when Europe was target of many terrorist attacks (in Belgium and Paris etc.) that nurtured the anti-Islamic sentiments.

The ideological aspect of these caricatures resides in the effect they conduct on the public opinion. They contribute in creating a set of values and beliefs that are “**representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation.**” As Fairclough and Wodak explained (1997:275). These ideologies do in fact contribute in the construction of a reality, a reality that establishes specific relations of dominance between the host Europeans and the Arab Muslim immigrants in the west. Critical discourse analysis interest in these ideologies is in fact aiming at unveiling them namely that the European citizens develop fake awareness of their reality. Not only Europeans but also immigrants themselves need to understand the embedded ideologies of caricatural discourses as a step towards emancipating themselves from dominance, control, power abuse, inequality and racism. So, as “**meanings are produced through interpretations of texts**” (Fairclough 1992: P.89), ideologies are understood through interpretation of the

embedded messages and the deep intentions of the caricaturists. Understanding these ideologies is in fact a first step towards constructing a social cognition and then enacting change into society. Immigrants, through analyzing the embedded ideologies of caricatures about their issues, do contribute in presenting the other side of reality because these ideological stereotypes and representations of the west are only a one-side perspective of reality.

The debate about immigrants' main issues wherein Arab and Islamic behaviors and style of life in the west seems unpleasant and are rejected by Europeans hides a conflict between two broad ideologies. The refusal of the west of the Islamic and Arabized signs of immigrants including the ones born and raised in Europe is interpreted in the west as a failure of Europe to convince them with its values. In an interview with Hakim El Karoui, Senior Fellow at Institut Montaigne and the author of the report "A French Islam is possible", in attempting to answer the question about the fact that "there is a real French passion for the debate around the veil, to the surprise of our neighbors" he replied, "***The veil could therefore mean to French people that the Republic has failed to make its values desirable, and has failed to share them with the immigrants' children, even though they were born on French soil.***"<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the issue is more than a piece of cloth on some women's heads (headscarf) or a beard on men's face, rather it is a style of life and a way of looking at things. The real debate is not on the veil or the head cover, as there are different types of veils: the headscarf of Iran is not the one of turkey nor is it the one of North Africa. Yet the western public opinion refers to all types as a veil; an Islamic sign. And here resides the essence of the problem: connecting the headscarf to religion and confusing the public opinion to think that all Muslim women put a headscarf and all headscarves are hijab. The veil issue has clearly exposed the contradictions and the double standard of the European community in the sense that "***while the modern secular nation state formally assigns itself a position of neutrality and distance on religious matters, its authority is dependent on its capacity to determine which kinds of religious expressions and practices are legitimate in public and which are not***" (Amir- Moazami 2013: 91)

The (il) legality of face covering is ideologically rooted in a debate between secularism and divine perspectives. While the Muslim east considers covering women's face a symbol of Piety, purity and religiosity, "***In our occidental societies the face is the part of the body which carries the heart of the individual, the soul, the reason, the personality. For us this is a cultural secular heritage***" (Laneyrie-Dagen 2009)<sup>10</sup>. The debate about Muslim women's hijab is strongly directed by ideologies. It is media oriented to frame immigrant women, Arab and Muslim women and headscarves within the concept of hijab in its religious dimensions. Nevertheless, wearing a headscarf by these women is a social issue that should that should be discussed in relation to the women's status in the family and in the whole Muslim society. Hijab or headscarf is more than a religious sign, it is a cultural and anthropological expression as concluded the aforementioned Montaigne's report of 2016 (A French Islam is possible) which claims that "***Muslim women wearing the veil are motivated by religious duty (76%), issues of safety (35%) and the desire to display their Muslim faith (23%), with only 6% saying that they are coerced or imitating others.***"

The conflict of ideologies becomes very sharp and obvious when the caricaturists tend to trivialize some fundamental issues and put them in the same position with what is allowed and what is not. Take for instance the caricature below (Figure 5)

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/muslim-veil-france-why-so-controversial> (Last retrieved on February 25th,2020)

<sup>10</sup> Statement by art historian Nadeije Laneyrie- Dagen, articulated during the hearings on the face veil in France. Mission d'information sur la pratique du port du voile intégral sur le territoire national (December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Séance 4.30 Compte rendu no.16)

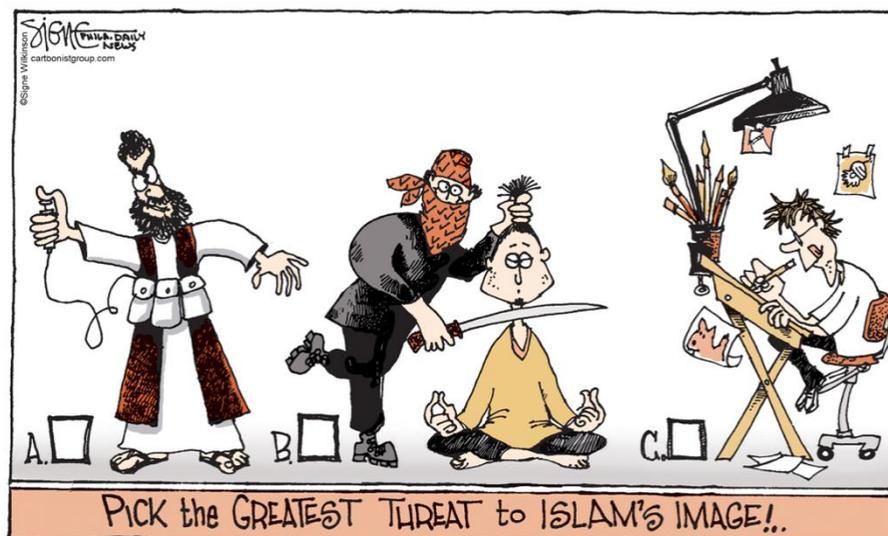


Figure 5

The above cartoon by Signe Wilkinson in 2010 is a form of multiple-choice test about the image that represents the greatest threat to the image of Islam. It shows three images of three people/ choices: A/ a bearded man with an explosive belt around his waist and his thumb on the detonation button. B/ a masked man with a scarf covering his head and face. He is carrying a big knife about to behead an innocent person who is sitting in a state of peace of mind. C/ An artist sitting in his studio and he is holding a pencil to draw some pictures. The first two people are Muslim (beards) while the third one is not (western) and they are presented as markers of images representing Islam even though none of them is in fact related to Islam. The above caricature seems to be defending Islam when claiming that the Jihadists Muslims who are killing people (al Qaida and ISIS...) are spoiling the image of Islam more than the cartoons produced by Europeans.

The discourse of this caricature is very blasphemous and offensive as it generalizes and summarizes the image of Muslims and Islam in some fixed stereotypes that reduce it in terrorism, killing and violence. Moreover, the first two choices are very negative and they favor the last choice, which supports the ideology of the caricature. The expected answer is inevitably choice C. Thus, the caricaturist aims at underestimating the effect of the caricatures of the prophet Mohamed. There is a sort of reprimanding for the Muslims' reactions to the cartoons in the sense that these reactions should be to the real threats to Islam and its image rather than to the drawings that have raised a lot of controversies.

Finally, we can claim that European caricatures are manifestations of the ideology of right wing parties whose beliefs revolve around the idea of order, punishment, superiority of the local authorities and hatred to foreigners. These principles are summarized in Mudde's claim "*the ideological core of the populist radical right – defined as a combination of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism*" (2010: 1173)

This ideological core has been clearly manifested in the European attitude towards immigrants and Islamophobia in the sense that media and specifically caricatures have presented immigrants as a threat to the nationalist identity. They were considered responsible for unemployment, crimes and social instability. These stereotypes and generalized judgments were exploited by many politicians and political agendas that passed anti-immigration and deportation laws. Hence, we can coin Adorno's (1950) statement that the western extremist thought stems from the psychological nature of individuals who cannot live in a multi-society and tend to think according to a fixed, unchanging pattern and claim that the European tendency of rejecting immigrants

stems from their inability to accept the other who might lead a change in their culture and community to which they do not see themselves ready. Nevertheless, Islamophobia as a term became significant of hatred of Islam and Muslims. Those who were calling for fighting against racism were calling for fighting all sorts of discrimination but speaking about fighting against Islamophobia implies fighting against the practitioners of that religion. And this is very dangerous as it is filled with hatred and racism. Therefore, Islamophobia is a blatant appeal to discrimination and racism on ideological basis.

To conclude, we can claim that caricatures of Arabs and Muslim immigrants in Europe establish an image of inferiority of this “other” on three distinctive levels: mental, ideological and economic. We can also claim that the European cartoonists are not objective in their coverage of the issues related to immigrants namely those from Arab and Muslim backgrounds. This subjectivity is due first to a lack of information; as they are inspired mainly from the data presented in the media about those immigrants and also because European cartoonists themselves are part of the whole system which feels the threat of Arabs and Muslims on their European identity as well as their belief in the European supremacy and superiority over the other people. We cannot deny that there are some exceptions that are almost invisible and have no direct effect on the socio-political life in their countries.

As any other discourse, caricature is governed by ideology. The caricaturist’s ideology is clear in the subjects of his cartoons, which deal with some issues at the expense of others. The artist by nature is supposed to tackle topics that defend the rights of the simple citizen against all forms of injustice, whether by the institutions of the state or by the individuals in a given society. Yet this is not always the case in European caricatures about immigrants and migration issues in general.

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