Psychology Of Islamophobia: A Case Study Of Caricatures And Media

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Abstract

Islamophobia is an expression of prejudice and enmity toward Muslims. After 9/11, it became more prevalent in western society, especially in Sweden, where two hundred occurrences with overtly anti-Islamic overtones were registered in 2007 and the number increases so on if other western countries are included in the list. Hate speech against Islam and Muslim immigrants, and publication of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were counted as freedom of speech. (Davison, 2022), (Gruber & Shalem, 2014), (Parfitt & Egorova, 2005), (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004) and many other scholars have discussed the issue in various aspects and suggested ways to encounter it but the practical situation has not changed yet as print and electronic media highlights the issue in a negative mode. This paper aims to present a brief history of caricatures, their real causes, the role of media in spreading islamophobia, and the reaction of the Muslim community towards it and concludes that this issue cannot be resolved until the basic issues i.e; the conflict of views about the personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his teachings, Islam and Muslim Community, are highlighted and awareness about these is spread among people through media positively.

Keywords: islamophobia, caricatures, Charlie Hebdo, religious diversity, hate speech, freedom of speech

Introduction

Islamophobia is a widely acknowledged social problem consuming the entire world regularly. This problem has been examined with its effects on Muslims residing in the west and how their lives are negatively impacted by it. Islamophobia is not a brand-new issue. (Taras, 2012) It denotes hostility and prejudice toward Muslims and Islam. The term is like xenophobia, which has a connotation with Islamophobia.

The Runnymede Trust coined the term "Islamophobia" in 1997, referring to the "Overt, Covert, and Unfavorable Treatment of Peoples that Belong to the Muslim Community.(Ghanea Bassiri, 2013)

Following 9/11, it gained prominence in western society, particularly in Sweden; two hundred cases with Islamophobic undertones were reported in 2007. Islamophobia is a complicated phenomenon with various manifestations and characteristics that must be understood from a perspective that contrasts the East and West. (Edvardsson, 2009)

Hate narratives need to be comprehended if we are to understand the issue of Islamophobia. A remark that denigrates brutalises and assaults, or creates discrimination against people based on gender, race, or religion is known as a hate narrative. After September 11, 2001, this institutionalised social phenomenon gathered significant momentum, leading to a sharp surge in crimes committed against Arab and global Muslims. Religion and violence seem to be great friends, according to the description of the relationship between the two. (Dhaouadi, 2020)

Most adherents of Islam, the second-largest religion in the world (John, 2010), are aware of Islamophobia. However, some have unknowingly encountered it because of radical and harsh attitudes toward the Muslim community in western nations. The ugliest manifestations of Islamophobia—hate speeches, Quran burnings, and caricatures of the Prophet (SAW)—need to be addressed publicly. (Naseem & Hafeez, 2017)

Literature Review

Islamophobia is a burning issue in the current era and many scholarly papers and books have been written about it. (Davison, 2022) focuses on islamophobia in the context of anti-racism in Australia and discusses the negative consequences of discussions about Islamophobia in Australia over last 15 to 20 years. (Gruber & Shalem, 2014) opens a thematic and theoretical dialogue on

visualization of the Prophet in Europe, America, and the Muslim world, from the Middle Ages to the present. (Parfitt & Egorova, 2005) has discussed the role of modern media about the conflict between Muslims and Jews and that it has played a pro-active role in the Middle East conflict, the coverage of which is obscured by the contrasting images of Jew and Muslim in western thought. (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004) discusses the miseducation of the West and examines the ways in which educational institutions have shaped Western views of Islam as in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries England, France, and Russia colonized much of the Muslim world. Moreover, the authors suggest a critical education which can counter such tendencies and work to conceptualize 9/11 in a variety of contexts.

Research Gap:

The previous literature, though, presents the causes of Islamophobia but it does not indicate the real cause behind it, which is conflict of basic views among Muslims and Christian world. That why this paper aimed to present a brief history of caricatures, their causes, the role of media in spreading islamophobia, conflict of views about the personality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and the reaction of the Muslim community towards it.

Caricatures: A Definition

The term "caricature," derived from the Latin "caricare," connotes exaggeration and stacking and is reproduced; it is a rich, flexible, and stunning visual medium. (Topuz, 1986) There are several definitions of caricature because of this factor. Still, a common one is that it is a drawing that takes the exciting and unique aspects of an occasion or situation and makes them the central component of humor and thinking.

Political, comedic, and illuminating cartoons are the three main categories. (Çifci & Kaplan, 2020)

Western Perception of the Holy Prophet through the History of Caricatures

The conversation about Islam in Europe has centered on Muhammad (SAW). (Tolan, 2010) Islam offers a distinctive mandatory way of life for every Muslim, unifying Muslims worldwide and separating them from followers of other religions. As a result, Islam's adversaries are constantly at war with it, but the conflict between the two sides has multiplied in the age of technology. (Bulliet, 1979)

The foundation of Prophet Hood is the idea of divinity, which is present in Islam and Christianity. The concept of prophethood is different in that Muslims disagree with Christians who see Jesus Christ as the "Son of God" since they believe that all prophets are human and that he was crucified to atone for human crimes. Thus, the Christian view is based on an individual, but the Muslim view is centered on Allah, resulting in social, economic, and political evolution. Christians, therefore, never embrace the holy Prophet (SAW) since it goes against their moral and theological values. (AbulQaraya, 2016)

According to a study by Saeed Sharafat, the Western church views the rise of Islam as a serious threat and an intimidating foe.

By using the blasphemous terms "impostor," "apostate," or "unbeliever," as well as the words "the devil" and "antichrist," the church has perverted the Prophet Muhammad's image and used him to support racist doctrines. As the Prophet told the early Christians and Jews of Medina that he had come to bear witness to Jesus and Moses—even though he establishes that the Prophet Jesus was neither a God nor a portion of God

but rather God's chosen messenger—Western prejudices against Prophet Muhammad are bound by misunderstandings and misrepresentations. (Khan & Al-Olaqi, 2020)

Negative perceptions of Islam, Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and the Holy Quran have been formed because of the conflicting views of the Western Christian community about the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) and Allah, as well as the conflict's cultural and political dimensions. Additionally, the creation of cartoons of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the west's ongoing backing for Zionism, its dominance of Islamic governments, and its raids on Muslim territories are the key themes of Islamophobia and the lousy perception of Muhammad's (SAW) prophethood. (AbulQaraya, 2016)

Muhammad's persona and the wording of the Qur'an might have aroused curiosity and respect, particularly among those who questioned the Church's influence in European society or dissented from its orthodox doctrines. Miguel Servet, a Unitarian in the sixteenth century, used the Qur'an to refute the Trinity concept. After being found guilty by the Catholic Church, he escaped and was executed in Geneva under the Calvinist regime. Some looked to the Ottomans' tolerance of religious diversity, centered on the Qur'an and followed them as an example for Europeans to follow during the terrible confessional conflicts that swept across Europe. (Tolan, 2019)

Muhammad was portrayed as a revolutionary who abolished the privileges of the corrupt and superstitious clergy, displayed tolerance for Jews and Christians, and restored the true spirit of unity by several writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England, France, and other countries. He was depicted as a "great man" in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, an Arab national hero who introduced law, religion, and honor to his people. Many of these authors are more concerned with understanding the lessons that may be applied to their situation and forecasts from Muhammad's stories than they are with Islam and its prophet. (Tolan, 2019)

Medieval Period

Since the Islamic concept that Jesus was only a person and the rejection of earlier teachings because Muhammad (SAW) is the last prophet, the west, during the existence of Islam in the Medieval period, thought that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was a fraudulent claimant of prophecy. The Holy Prophet (SAW) was depicted as a man possessed by the devil in several ninth-century biographies, which contributed to the unification of European states in the form of crusades. The Spanish church endorsed this declaration that Muhammad (SAW) was the antichrist. Peter the Venerable wanted the Holy Quran translated into Latin to disprove Islam later in the 12th century and considered the Prophet (SAW) the antichrist.

Additionally, certain writings from the 13th century spread false information about Islam by comparing it to Christian heresy and the prophet (SAW) to a juggler. Western churchmen held that Muhammad (SAW), intrigued by Satan, created Islam. Even by changing his name from Muhammad to Mohamed, the devil in the flesh, they displayed their hatred. The holy Prophet (SAW) was once more depicted as a heretic, false prophet, and the originator of violent religion in specific other European literature. The Holy Prophet (SAW) was portrayed as Satan being tormented in hell in Dante's Divine Comedy. (AbulQaraya, 2016)

Abuse in the Present

History has demonstrated that there has been long-standing hostility toward Islam. The West is constantly working to discredit it. Currently, tensions between Muslims and the West have risen after 9/11, when Muslims were labelled as terrorists and extremists. The Italian 9/11 film La Inferno portrayed the part of Muhammad (SAW), ad South Park, an American animated sitcom, including the Holy Prophet (SAW) image. Jews and Christians have a constant rivalry with Islam; thus, they go to great lengths to demonize it.

The then-secretary general of NATO identified Islam as the west's first enemy after the USSR's fall and the world's transition from a bipolar to a unipolar system. In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, George W. Bush launched a crusade against Muslim nations. Once more, they began to persecute the holy Prophet's honorable character, and this time it was their allies and followers (SAW). Regarding this, Craig Winns' book Prophet of Doom compared the holy Prophet (SAW) to a bandit who commits murders to seize absolute authority.

Muhammad And Sight is the title of an article by Jallands-Posten that included twelve parody cartoons. According to the report, some Muslims reject the secular world and want special treatment because of their religious views, which is at odds with the modern idea of democracy and freedom. Everyone is guaranteed to endure criticism and mockery. These cartoons were chosen from entries in a competition the newspaper held for artists after learning about an article titled "Intense terror of criticism of Islam" that appeared in Danish politician in September 2017. Right-wing extremist Jyllands-Posten is adept at disseminating hate speech, particularly toward Islam and Muslim immigrants. Without a doubt, the journal had support and backing from their political parties and governments to spread

its vicious anti-Muslim propaganda. (Hervik, 2012)

The controversial caricatures depicting the holy Prophet (SAW) as a terrorist were once more published by the 17th Danish newspaper in February 2008. Following Jyllands-Posten, numerous publications in Europe and America reprinted the cartoons. The same caricatures were published in the Norwegian Magazine German Die Welt and French Soir on January 10, 2006. In February 2006, the cartoons were reprinted in the Italian La Stampa, the Spanish El Periodico, and the Dutch Volkskrant. Two cartoons were published in the Belgian Le Soir and the American New York Sun. On February 4th, 2006, the Polish Rzeczpospolita, the Danish Dagbladet Information, and the New Zealander Dominion Post reprinted these cartoons. (Ait Abdeslam, 2019)

Inspirations for Caricatures

Muslims find it disgusting and repulsive when others make fun of and insult the most revered figure in Islam. Muslims have been incensed by the despicable act of painting derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which show disrespect for Islam and the Prophet (SAW), and occasionally appear in Western media outlets that do it on purpose. Islam has been distorted with slight improvement during the decade, and for Muslims, disobeying the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) revelation is the biggest sin. The goal of the West and the West's media is to incite Muslims and the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to disparage the true religion and its Great Prophet. It might be viewed as starting animosity against the Muslim population in the wake of 9/11. Some Muslims disapprove of the contemporary religious scene. They seek a unique position that is not in keeping with the nation's democracy, and anyone in such a position

should be ready to put up with mockery and disdain. (Bonde, 2007)

Islam has traditionally been viewed as a powerful political and religious force threatening Western countries. It turned out to be the West's "new enemy," justifying the cast of characters and the pursuit of its expansion plans. Some of the terms used in it are "culture anomie," "anti-cultural ", and" threat "in western countries," "challenge to western security," "current global anxieties," "more," and "fifth column". Due to the religion's recent and rapid global growth, Islam has become a target of racial discrimination. In terms of culture, politics, and religion, it tended to advance and confront Western nations. As a result of widespread conversion to Islam, Western countries now find it easier to reject this religion and its adherents than to attempt to comprehend it. (Iqbal, 2010)

Media's Part in Promoting Islamophobia

The quick expansion of mass media, including print and electronic media, is very promising because it promotes social activities on various platforms. Mass media transform information within mass media as well as between media and society. The mass media's current influence has been so significant that it affects everything that occurs daily. (Istriyani, 2016)

When the media reported on the tragedy at the World Trade Center in New York in 2001, it was widely believed that the Islamic community was to blame for global issues, particularly terrorism. The American and western societies started categorizing the Muslim community. Following the Bali bombing incident, the American and Australian governments published a list of individuals believed to be involved in terrorism-related activities and began

conducting home raids on Muslims in October 2002. (Dr. Anton Minardi, 2021)

The media portrayed their demeanor and catchphrases, such as Allah u Akbar, as a representation of terrorism. Islam was shown in the media in a stereotyped manner, and the government authorities trusted the media's image of the religion. (Carland, 2011)

Islamophobia has become more prevalent in the modern world because of the media. Any religious believer will object to exploiting their religion since religion is such a sensitive topic. Psychoanalysis research claims that aggressive behavior results from human beings' innate desire to die and that people lose fear when guarding their faith. (Ogan et al., 2014)

Islam is no longer portrayed in the media as a violent religion or as having a violent doctrine. Thus, it is now seen as cruel, outdated, and irrational. This was done to satisfy the audience's curiosity. Therefore, Islam has been linked to bombings, killings, or terrorism. Even though Islam uses language that alludes to salvation or peace, very few persons who identify as Muslims practice violence, radicalization, or terrorism. The effects are against Muslims as a result.

Both positive and negative uses of media are possible when it comes to Islamophobia. It can be helpful for the world if it is used to raise awareness about respect for religion and preexisting social norms. On the other hand, it can cause societal unrest and detestable occurrences if the media is used to explore religious issues in the name of amusement and freedom. Therefore, based on these viewpoints, the media may contribute to Islamophobia while offering a method for combating it. (Saeed, 2007)

Social Media

The well-known social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, are the ones that are most frequently associated with religious hatred. These social media platforms have the power to alter the community's religious beliefs. Unfortunately, social media is vital for connecting believers and non-believers and gaining their hearts through da'wa. This is because religious instruction is not the primary use of these social media platforms.

In western society and politics, Islamophobia and hate speech on social media are developing problems. These social media sites negatively impact Muslim target populations, fueling extremism and violent tendencies.

With 2.89 billion active monthly users, Facebook is one of the social media networks with the quickest growth. Thousands of people in this area engage in hate speech, narratives that are racist and Islamophobic, and acts of violence against the Muslim minority. These folks try to instigate conflict digitally. Monitoring and strategic strategies are needed to minimize the adverse effects of the daily posts that they share. (Awan, 2016)

Another effective channel for the dissemination of hate speech and anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic ideologies is Twitter. However, it was seen that, over time, anti-Islamic tweets were evolving. This volume of tweets disparaging Islam is closely tied to current affairs. These figures are likely to rise in the event of a terrorist incident. This investigation showed that western countries have a worldview that directly associates Islam with terrorist activity. (Awan, 2014)

Anti-Islam Forces

In the west, anti-Islamic forces are split into six factions. The Slavs, certain Muslims,

intellectuals and secular fundamentalists, Zionists, Christians, Hindus, and several other religious groups. (Perry, 2014)

The group of intellectuals and secular fundamentalists includes well-known authors, university professors, journalists, writers on the staff of congress, and writers for think tanks. This group demonstrates to everyone, including secular humanists and fundamentalists, that religions should be eliminated from family life or, at the very least, reduced to a personal belief system. These proponents of anti-Islamic doctrines are utterly hostile to Islam and offer a comprehensive manual against it. Mervin Hiskett, Samuel P. Huntington, Bernard Lewis, Christopher Coker, and Francis are a few of this group's well-known authors. These authors don't invent lies but are frequently accused of telling people half-truths that cause them to misinterpret Islamic principles. (Abaza, 2000)

A group of fundamentalists consists of non-Jewish intellectuals who support the state of Israel to incite further animosity toward the Palestinian people. These organizations constantly seek to quiet Muslims by supporting scholars because most Palestinians are Arab and Muslim. As a result of their anti-Islamic operations, support for the Jewish administration increased. This fundamentalist organization is involved in crowd control and influencing government policies on the one hand. It is common knowledge that their parties' priorities voters and that these people select "Policymakers".

These organizations serve their interests by advocating for them before higher authorities. Zionist fundamentalists operate in the shadows, some of whom go by the name of Steve Emerson, who made the fake documentary "Jihad in America". (Neuman & Finkelman, 2006) The false movies and publications created by the Zionists are being used to propagate Islamophobia.

According to Hall Lindsey's book "The Final Battle," which bears a scriptural allusion, there will soon be a global conflict in which Muslims will be decisively crushed, ending Islam as we know it. (Lindsey, 1995)

A scary image is presented in the British documentary "The Sword of Islam," which reveals how an Islamic fundamentalist ideology poses a more significant threat to the west than either fascism or communism. The liars who promote Christian extremist doctrines work hard to incite great hatred toward Muslims and Islam. Their goals are to start fear and animosity toward Muslims among the public. These extremists see Islam as a genuine rival to Christianity and are envious of its quick ascent. (Perry, 2014)

Fundamentalist Hindus are evident in India, but they are also apparent in the West. Through the media, many extremists in India mislead the public. These phony academics influence policy. (Singh, 2009)

The Serbs, those who speak Slavic, and the Eastern European tribes of Russia are all slaves. They are somehow associated with the Orthodox Church. The Ottoman Empire has been at war with these Slavs for the last five hundred years. After the Crusaders invaded their nation and began to spread Islam on a modest scale, very few Slavs converted to Islam. The little Dawah activity done by the Crusaders did not provide many opportunities for people to convert to Islam. This explains why there are Muslims in Bosnia, Albania, Chechnya, Kosovo, and Macedonia, among other places. In addition, many Slavic countries, including fundamentalists in India, want to drive these Muslims out of their lands or exterminate them. It has been noted that active wars have

been raging in Bosnia, Chechnya, Kosovo, and Macedonia for the past few years. (Laruelle & Yudina, 2018)

French Parodies

Regarding the French media, the France Soir republished the Danish cartoons of the holy Prophet (SAW) and created a new one on February 1st, 2006. The following day, they were reprinted in LaMonde, another French magazine. The drawings were reprinted in Charlie Hebdo, a weekly satirical publication, along with a new one that included the caption: It is difficult to be liked by idiots. (Fassin, 2015)

It has been proven that western media is biased and prejudiced and actively and consciously works to discredit Islam. They thought that one day Muslims would overrun the west and seize their absolute control. To show the world that Islam is not the religion of God and that the holy prophet (SAW) made it up for himself, they dramatize the entire issue. (Farouh & Abdelrhim, 2021)

Charlie Hebdo

Stupid and Nasty, Hiri Kiri Hebdo, the forerunner of Charlie Hedo, was founded in 1969. After being banned in 1970 due to its initial cover referring to General Charles De Gaulle's death ("Terrible ball at Colombey: 1 dead"), it was reinstated under Harlie Hedo. (Visier, n.d.) In 1982, it stopped, but it returned in 1992. (Horsman, 2020)

The chief editorial manager was a newcomer named Philippe Val. (Horsman, 2020) After 9/11, Val's political attitude was scrutinized because he analyzed radicals who failed to condemn the attack. They disliked American feelings. Together fighting the new dictatorship, Islamism," a statement initially published in Charlie Hebdo, was co-signed by him and eleven other people in 2006. Taslima Nasreen and Salman Rushdie were

among the signatories. ("Ensemble Contre Le Nouveau Totalitarisme, l'islamisme," 2006)

Now that Fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism have been defeated, the world must contend with a new totalitarian worldwide threat: Islamism. The battle will be fought on the ideological front, not with weapons. (Quarterly, 2006)

Philippe Val departed the publication in 2009, and Cherab was appointed the new editor. (Visier, n.d.) Theo van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker, was assassinated in Amsterdam in 2004 because of a movie he had directed that dealt with violence against women in some Islamic social norms. (Martigny, 2010)

The following year, Danish author Kre Bluitgen complained that his children's book The Qur'an and the Life of the Prophet Muhammad could not be illustrated because of the artist's fear of responses. On September 30, 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published a question about whether they would depict Muhammad. (Visier, n.d.)

A portion of the illustration was accurate (Muhammad with a portable stick on a desert expedition, with the sun on the left, just barely missing the target), but specific details were changed (the Islamic star and bow met with the embodiment of Muhammad). One depicted a skilled visual artist hiding his portrayal of Muhammad. Another had a young man named Mohamed standing in front of a chalkboard and pointing to a written statement that read, "The publication group of Jyllands-Posten is full of traditionalist provocateurs". Another depicted Muhammad flying overhead, congratulating Muslims who had halted the assault and declaring that no virgins were left. (Visier, n.d.)

After 9/11, Philippe Val, the editorial director of Charlie Hebdo, concentrated more on

political Islamism and fundamentalists. It is difficult to be loved by idiots, Mohammed cries, as he holds his head in his hands and the caption "Mohammed overpowered by fanatics" appears on the front of Charlie Hebdo's reissue of the 12 Danish cartoons in February 2006. (Horsman, 2020)

The Paris Great Mosque and the Union of Islamic Associations of France then filed a lawsuit against its chief editor Phillipe Val because these drawings were offensive to Muslims and fostered hatred for them. The French court only considered the anti-Muslim cartoon of the holy Prophet (PBUH) with a bomb in his turban, which depicts Muslims as terrorists. The court ruled, however, that the cartoons were intended to be offensive to terrorists rather than Muslims and that blasphemy is not a crime in France. Following the publication of the cartoons, the workers of Charlie Hebdo experienced passing risks, and the newspaper was placed under police security.

The conflict's second phase took place in 2011. At that time, C. Fourest and other polemical writers like Phillipe Val had already departed the newspaper. Charlie Hebdo was shut down on November 2, not long after its regularly scheduled November 3 publication. Muhammad served as the guest article director for the Sharia Hebdo edition. It happened just after the Ennahda party's victory in Tunisia and the justifications for polygamy and Sharia given by Libyan trailblazers. (Horsman, 2020)

On January 7, 2015, two terror-based Islamist assailants carrying assault rifles and other weapons forced their way into the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. Initially, they fired up to fifty rounds, killing eleven individuals (including Charb, Wolinsky, Cabu, Riss, and B. Maris) and injuring eleven more while yelling "Allah u Akbar" during their

onslaught. After the Charlie attack, President François Hollande proclaimed January 8 as a National Day of Mourning, requiring a moment of silence in all public buildings. There was a meeting on January 10th across numerous French urban networks. Je Suis Charlie, which is French meaning "I'm Charlie," has developed into a standard symbol of fortitude in the face of insults. Following the attack, the hashtag #Jesuis Charlie quickly rose to the top of the list of Twitter hashtags worldwide. (Horsman, 2020)

On October 16, 2020, a Chechen child killed a French teacher in the street in a suburb of Paris after the teacher had displayed a picture of the Prophet during a civics lesson. President Emmanuel Macron referred to the teacher as a holy figure, vowed to end the "Islamist insurrection," sparked violent clashes, and invited Turkey and a few other Muslim nations to join a boycott of French products. (Rahim et al., 2022)

Using Free Speech to Promote Caricatures
Following the Holocaust, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which fully promoted fundamental human rights. The freedom of speech and expression was protected by UDHR Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes the ability to hold opinions without interference and the freedom to seek out, receive, and share information and ideas across all media and boundaries. (Nations, n.d.-b)

The ICCPR protects the right to receive and transmit information orally, in writing, or through any other medium. (Nations, n.d.-a) This demonstrates the protection of all spoken, written, and sign languages. At the individual and societal levels, the freedom of free expression is vital. Freedom of speech

and opinion are prerequisites for a person's complete growth, particularly in any society and the cornerstone of every free and democratic society. (UN Human Rights Committee, n.d.)

Political speech, commentary on one's own and public affairs, canvassing, discussion of human rights, journalism, cultural and artistic expression, teaching, and religious discourse are protected types of communication. (UN Human Rights Committee, n.d.)

Without freedom of expression, it is impossible to communicate thoughts, convictions, and beliefs and to participate meaningfully in a democracy. States have the authority under international law to impose restrictions on the freedom of expression regarding issues involving public safety, health, morality, and order. Because there are no restrictions on what a person is free to say or write, freedom of expression is liberty. (Gunatilleke, 2021)

French Caricatures and Freedom of Expression

When the holy Prophet (PBUH) cartoons were first published in Denmark in 2005, they sparked a discussion over the right to freedom of expression. Later, the controversy erupted following the 2015 attack on Charlie Hebdo. Twelve people were killed, primarily Charlie Hebdo staff. On January 11, 2015, Western leaders travelled to Paris to participate in a solidarity march to denounce the attack. (Gunatilleke, 2021)

Another caricature of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) holding a sign that read, "All is forgiven, and Je Suis am Charlie" or "I am Charlie" was published by Charlie Hebdo on January 13, 2015. (Gunatilleke, 2021) Twelve caricatures first published in Jyllands Posten in 2005 were republished in Charlie Hebdo in 2007. The Prophet (PBUH)

was shown in one cartoon "carrying a lighted bomb in his head ornamented with the declaration of Muslim faith instead of a turban." Muslims in the west protested in response to this caricature, which sparked indignation and rallies around the Muslim world. Based on the principle of freedom of expression, the leaders of the West supported the journal.

France's Prime Minister, Francois Fillon, declared on November 2 that "freedom of expression is an inalienable right in our democracy and that all attempts to restrict press freedom must be strongly opposed". When 11 Muslim ambassadors requested a meeting with the Danish government, it stated that it could not affect press freedom; yet blasphemy is illegal under Danish law. (French Satirical Paper Charlie Hebdo Attacked in Paris - BBC News, n.d.)

The editor of Jyllands-Posten, Flimming Rose, wrote in his column for February 19th, 2015, "Why I Published Cartoon of Muhammad and Don't Regret It," saying it was crucial to defending "free society against fear culture". (Rose, n.d.) This means that the freedom of expression guarantees the absolute right to disseminate any information that Western media deems appropriate.

The editor of Charlie Hebdo, Philippe Val, was sued in February 2007 by two Muslim organizations, The Grand Mosque of Paris, and the Union of Islamic Organizations of France, for defaming Muslims by republishing twelve caricatures e initially published in Jyllands Posten. Since it was a matter of free speech since the cartoons targeted extremists rather than Muslims, the prosecutor decided not to pursue any legal action. The French court rejected the argument made by Muslim organizations and declared that cartoon number 2 is insensitive

to Islam since it links Muslims to terrorism. (Fouché, 2007)

It is unclear if French law imposes restrictions on free speech. The court's ruling is not particularly compelling. Instead of depicting the holy Prophets, Charlie Hebdo could have shown cartoons of terrorist organization leaders if it wanted to alienate fanatics (PBUH). (Duggan, 2015) The ideology of terrorism must be separated from Muslims and Islam. Muslims had denounced the violence, including the attack on Charlie Hebdo. Under French domestic law, the European Convention on Human Rights applies restrictions on freedom of expression. It is defamatory to make any remark or factual claim that harms the honor or reputation of the person or entity of which the fact is stated, according to Article 29 of the Freedom of the Press Act 1881 (French Law). (Shah, 2017)

Protecting "reputation or rights of others" is one of the phrases used in Article 10 of the European Court of Human Rights. The second cartoon was similarly offensive by the Danish prosecutor. As it harms the honor and character of Muslims, the French prosecutor should have brought charges against Charlie Hebdo under articles 29 and 32 of French law. (Shah, 2017)

Islamophobia and racism are both present in the caricatures. These caricatures illustrate excessive stereotyping and suggest that all Muslims are terrorists. (Lindekilde et al., 2009) The natural perception of Islam that the ordinary individual has of Islam after seeing these cartoons is that all Muslims are terrorists or supporters of terrorism. As a result, these cartoons are widely known in anti-Islamic groups and despised by Muslims alike. About two billion people identify as Muslims worldwide, and they have uniformly condemned the drawing as being anti-Muslim and encouraging anti-Muslim sentiment. (Asser, 2010)

The historical incidents connected to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Islam, without presenting the full context, have been used to demonize Muslims and encourage Islamophobia. By neglecting the proper context of historical events, the cartoons portray Muslims and their Prophet as terrorists and misogynists. To put it briefly, these caricatures encourage the notion that Muslims are terrorists who abuse their women when urged to be good Muslims and covertly plot to take over Europe. (Weaver, 2010)

Most European extremists attempt to pass off Islamophobia as freedom of expression. It is crucial to emphasize that cartoons that are Islamophobic are racism that targets a particular faith. In contrast, if the Muslim community used the same cartoons to disparage other religions, they would be accused of being radical, terrorist, and biased. Thus, it is evident that cartoons spread Islamophobia. (Levey & Modood, 2009)

Aqeela Sadiq[1], Islamophobia denotes hostility and prejudice toward Muslims and Islam. A remark that denigrates, brutalizes, or creates discrimination against people based on gender, race, or religion is known as a hate narrative. After 9/11, it gained prominence in western society, particularly in Sweden, with two hundred cases of Islamophobic undertones reported in 2007. Islam offers a distinctive mandatory way of life for every Muslim, which unifies Muslims worldwide and separates them from followers of other religions. Muslims disagree with Christians' belief that Jesus Christ is the "Son of God" because they think all prophets are human and that he was crucified to atone for human crimes.

Negative perceptions of Islam, Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and the Holy Quran have been formed because of the conflicting views of the Western Christian community. Some looked to the Ottomans' tolerance of religious diversity, centered on the Qur'an, as an example for Europeans to follow.

In several ninth-century biographies, the Holy Prophet (SAW) was depicted as a man possessed by the devil. Peter the Venerable wanted the Holy Quran translated into Latin to disprove Islam. In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, George W. Bush launched a crusade against Muslim nations. Some Muslims reject the secular world and want special treatment because of their religious views. Jyllands-Posten is adept at disseminating hate speech, particularly toward Islam and Muslim immigrants.

The cartoons were selected from entries in a competition for artists after learning about an article titled "Intense terror of criticism of Islam". Islam has been distorted with slight improvement during the decade, and for Muslims, disobeying the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) revelation is the biggest sin. Some Muslims disapprove of the contemporary religious scene and seek a particular position not keeping with the nation's democracy.

Islamophobia has become more prevalent in the modern world because of the media. It can be helpful for the world if it is used to raise awareness about respect for religion and preexisting social norms. On the other hand, it can cause unrest and detestable occurrences if the media explores religious issues in the name of amusement and freedom. In western society and politics, Islamophobia and hate speech on social media are developing problems. Monitoring and strategic strategies are needed to minimize the harmful effects of

the daily posts that they share. This investigation showed that western countries have a worldview that directly associates Islam with terrorist activity.

In the west, anti-Islamic forces are split into six factions. The Slavs, certain Muslims, intellectuals and secular fundamentalists, Zionists, Christians, Hindus, and other religious groups. These include those who believe religion should be eliminated from family life or reduced to a personal belief system. Most Slavic countries, including fundamentalists in India, want to drive these Muslims out of their lands or exterminate them. Western media is biased and prejudiced and actively and consciously works to discredit Islam. They thought that one day Muslims would overrun the west and seize their absolute control.

Charlie Hebdo was founded in 1969 as Hiri Kiri Hebdo, the forerunner of Charlie Hedo. It was banned in 1970 due to its initial cover referring to General Charles De Gaulle's death. Theo van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker, was assassinated in 2004 after a film dealt with violence against women. After 9/11, Charlie Hebdo focused more on political Islamism and fundamentalists. The Paris Great Mosque and Union of Islamic Associations of France filed a lawsuit against its chief editor Phillipe Val.

On January 7, 2015, two terror-based Islamist assailants entered the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris. On October 16, 2020, a Chechen child killed a French teacher in the street in a suburb of Paris after the teacher had displayed a picture of the Prophet during a civics lesson. President Emmanuel Macron referred to the teacher as a holy figure, sparked violent clashes, and invited a boycott of French products.

The Prophet (PBUH) was shown in one cartoon "carrying a lighted bomb in his head ornamented with the declaration of Muslim faith instead of turban". Muslims in the west protested, which sparked indignation and rallies worldwide. Western leaders supported Charlie Hebdo based on the principle of freedom of expression. Charlie Hebdo could have shown cartoons of terrorist organization leaders if it wanted to alienate fanatics (PBUH). The ideology of terrorism must be separated from Muslims and Islam to be defeated.

It is considered defamatory to make any remark or factual claim that harms the honor or reputation of a person or entity. The cartoons depicting Muslims and their Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are used to demonize Muslims and encourage Islamophobia. By neglecting the proper context of historical events, the cartoons portray Muslims as terrorists and misogynists. It is crucial to emphasize that cartoons that are Islamophobic are racism that targets a particular faith.

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