

Solveig Steien

"Almost at War". The Mohammed Cartoon Crisis in Norwegian Media

Kurzfassung: Im Januar und Februar 2006 erlebten die Norweger die Verbrennung ihrer nationalen Fahne in Palästina und die Verbrennung norwegischer Botschaften und Konsulate in Syrien, dem Libanon und dem Iran aus dem einfachen Grund weil zwölf dänische Mohammed-Karikaturen der Jyllands-Posten in Norwegen nachgedruckt worden waren; die Karikaturen wurden drei Monate nach ihrem ursprünglichen Erscheinen in Dänemark in der unbedeutenden christlichen Wochenzeitung Magazinet veröffentlicht. Im Februar 2006 wurden die norwegischen ISAF-Streitkräfte angegriffen. Dieser Konflikt hatte einen überraschenden Einfluss auf die Innen- und Außenpolitik und die norwegische Veröffentlichung der Karikaturen löste eine globale Eskalation des Streits aus; Norwegische Zeitungen schrieben, dass sich das Land "beinahe im Krieg" befinde.

In meiner Studie habe ich untersucht, wie einige führende norwegische Zeitungen (Aften, Aftenposten, Dagbladet, Dagens Næringsliv, Dagsavisen and VG) diese unerwartete Krise dargestellt haben, und basierend auf der Unterscheidung zwischen Kriegs- und Friedensjournalismus die verschiedenen Diskurse analysiert, die zu einem substantiellen Teil der Medienberichterstattung wurden.

Das Konzept des Kriegs- vs. Friedensjournalismus wurde zwar ursprünglich nicht als Analyseinstrument für Medientexte oder Photographien entwickelt, sondern als praktisches Hilfsmittel für Journalisten in Konflikt- und Kriegssituationen. Gleichwohl bietet es eine Grundlage, auf welcher die Ergebnisse journalistischer Arbeit begutachtet und mit den professionellen Normen und ethischen Codes der Medien verglichen werden können. Zugleich zeigen das Aufkommen von Diskursen wie "Kampf der Kulturen", "Meinungsfreiheit", "wir" vs. "sie", z.B. "wir" vs. die Muslime, und die von der Presse verwendeten Quellen eine gute Passung mit dem Konzept.

Der Schwerpunkt der Analyse liegt auf Leitartikeln und Kommentaren ebenso wie auf inländischen Reportagen und Korrespondentenberichten. Mit der Analyse der Artikel verfolgte ich zugleich das Ziel, einige Bereiche zu skizzieren in denen das Konzept des Friedens- vs. Kriegsjournalismus einer Weiterentwicklung bedarf um ein umfassenderes und/oder adäquateres Instrument der Medienanalyse abzugeben.

Im Februar 2008 flammte der Konflikt in Dänemark erneut auf. In Reaktion auf von der dänischen Geheimpolizei so genannte konkrete Attentatspläne gegen Jylland-Postens Karikaturisten Kurt Wesetergaard, haben einige größere dänische Zeitungen die Mohammed-Karikaturen am 13. Februar 2008 nachgedruckt um damit ihrer Solidarität mit dem Karikaturisten Ausdruck zu verleihen und gegen "'terroristische' Bedrohung" zu protestieren, "welche die Unterbindung der Meinungsfreiheit zum Ziel habe" (jp.dk., February 13, 2008).

Abstract: In January and February 2006, Norwegians witnessed the burning of their national flag in Palestine, the burning of Norwegian embassies and consulates in Syria, Lebanon and Iran; all simply because twelve Danish Mohammed cartoons from Jyllands-Posten had been reprinted in Norway; the cartoons were published in a marginal Christian conservative weekly newspaper, Magazinet, three months after their original appearance in Denmark. In February 2006 the Norwegian ISAF-forces in Afghanistan were attacked. This conflict had a surprising impact on domestic and foreign policy, and the Norwegian publication of the cartoons triggered a global escalation of the controversy; Norwegian newspapers wrote that the country was "almost at war".

I have focused on how some leading Norwegian newspapers (Aften, Aftenposten, Dagbladet, Dagens Næringsliv, Dagsavisen and VG) covered this unexpected crisis and studied the different discourses that became a substantial part of the media coverage. In my analysis I have used an overall approach of War versus Peace journalism.

War and Peace journalism was not created as a concept for analysing media texts or photographs, but to provide practical tools for journalists in the field of conflict and war situations. Nevertheless, this approach gives an opportunity to examine the results of journalistic work and compare them with the press's ideals and ethical codes. At the same time, the occurrence of discourses like "clash of civilisations", freedom of speech, "us" versus "them", i.e., "us" versus the Muslims, and the newspapers' choice of sources for their stories, seem to fit with a model of War and Peace journalism. The focus is on opinion materials like editorials and comments, as well as on domestic reports and reportage by correspondents. By analysing samples of articles I have tried to outline some areas where the concept of Peace versus War journalism still needs to be developed, in order to become a comprehensive or more adequate approach to journalism and media analysis.

In February 2008 the conflict again flared up in Denmark. Due to what the Danish secret police call concrete assassination plans for Jyllands-Posten's cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, major Danish newspapers reprinted the Mohammed cartoons on February 13, 2008; in solidarity with the cartoonist and to protest against what the editors describe as "terrorists' threats meant to inhibit freedom of speech" (jp.dk., February 13, 2008).

1 Introduction

"Those who live in a democracy must be prepared to be humiliated and accept this as a fact. In fact, we are all sometimes humiliated when we read newspapers or watch TV. The difference is, though, that we don't set embassies on fire" (journalisten.no).¹ These thoughts were expressed by Flemming Rose, the editor for cultural issues of the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, when he visited Norway in June 2007, less than two years after he had initiated and published the twelve Mohammed cartoons that precipitated violent demonstrations in the Muslim world in which about 140 people lost their lives. The subject of this paper is how the Norwegian media covered the conflict.

"A Norway almost at war" is not a headline from April 1940 predicting the German invasion of Norway, but rather the title of an editorial comment in Norway's largest quality national newspaper, *Aftenposten*, some days after the attack on the Norwegian ISAF forces in Afghanistan in February 2006 – one of the dramatic events that accompanied the Mohammed cartoons controversy (*Aftenposten*, 12 February).² A 9 February editorial in *VG*, the largest Norwegian tabloid paper, uses the phrase "Norway at war", a common notion at the time. But when the newspapers announced that Norway was (almost) at war, they seemed to have forgotten that the country had already recently become involved in the war in Iraq and was contributing troops to the NATO forces in Afghanistan.

In this paper I present some of the analysis and conclusions of my thesis, "When Norway was Almost at War: The Mohammed Cartoons Controversy in Norwegian Newspapers" (May/June 2007). I analyse the newspapers' coverage in the context of the War, Peace and Nuanced Journalism approaches.³

For several weeks in late January and early February 2006, the media exposed the Norwegian public to images of home-made Danish and Norwegian flags being burnt in Palestine and the embassy being set on fire in Syria. The same seemed to be happening in Lebanon and Iran, and a major event was the attack in Afghanistan. The cartoons controversy began in Denmark, where on September 29, 2005 *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve cartoon caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed. However, the events in Norway and on Norwegian property are of particular importance, since the reprinting of the Danish cartoons more than three months later triggered an international escalation of the crisis.⁴ The controversy had major consequences, both for Norwegian domestic politics and at the international level.

The cartoons were published in *Magazinet* (10 January 2006), a marginal conservative Christian journal with a weekly circulation of about 4000. After the reprinting the Norwegian Government reacted quickly, apologising for the publication and expressing concern for the sensitivities of Muslim residents (Steien, 2007a:41). At the same time, however, it reaffirmed the right to freedom of speech. Foreign Secretary Jonas Gahr Støre and former PM Kjell Magne Bondevik (a Lutheran pastor in private life) were quoted in several television debates: "We have freedom of speech in Norway, but we don't have any obligation or duty to assert it" (ibid.)!

In Norway many Muslims also reacted strongly to the burning of the Norwegian national symbol (*Standpunkt*, NRK, 8 February) and the attacks on the embassies in Syria, Lebanon and Iran. Businesses in Islamic countries, such as Statoil in Iran and Telenor in Pakistan, were on alert due to threats of boycott actions against Norwegian products (*DN*, 15 February), which also caused concern in the Government, an obvious parallel to the Danish case.

In *Magazinet* the cartoons were accompanied by a critical report on Islam and Norwegian cartoonists' fear of offending Muslims and the consequent avoidance of Mohammed caricatures. *Dagbladet*, Norway's third largest newspaper, published the cartoons in their Internet edition the evening before *Magazinet* was distributed.⁵ *Aftenposten* published a facsimile in their Oslo-based evening edition (*After*) in October 2005, but there was no reaction. The conflict did not begin until January 2006, after *Magazinet* (and several larger regional newspapers) also published the cartoons.⁶

Most of the reactions at the time, and later in Norway, focused on *Magazinet's* initial article and, perhaps by making *Magazinet* a scapegoat, allowed other publishers to dodge questions about freedom of speech. Editor Vebjørn Selbekk and his supporters received death threats via Internet sites, telephone calls, letters and e-mails and had to hire bodyguards (ibid.). Selbekk launched his book, *Threatened by Islamists*, in October 2006, and the debate was revived. Then some representatives of Muslim organisations also reported that their lives had been threatened, although obviously not from the same

1. <http://www.journalisten.no/story/47320> [11.06.2007]

2. The newspaper samples are from 2006.

3. Theoretical definitions on pp. 5, 6, 8, 11.

4. For a further historical overview and presentation of the context, see the international project report, Kunelius et al.: *Reading the Mohammed Cartoons Controversy. An International Analysis of Press Discourses on Free Speech and Political Spin* (2007), and my thesis: *When Norway Was Almost at War. The Mohammed Cartoons Controversy in Norwegian Newspapers* (2007).

5. The story and the cartoons were also published in *Dagbladet.no* at the end of 2006.

6. *Stavanger Aftenblad*, 29 October 2005, in 2006: *Bergens Tidende* 15 January, *Morgenbladet* (three caricatures) 27 January, *Agderposten* 3 February, *Dagbladet* (a facsimile from an Egyptian newspaper), the Egyptian *El Fagr* published one cartoon in November, not to defend the cartoons, but rather to criticise them.

quarters (ibid.).¹ Selbekk became a defender of freedom of speech, although he has asserted that he himself would never publish cartoons critical of Jesus, and at least earlier had suggested reviving the "dormant" Penal Code article on blasphemy. Selbekk was consistently and unreservedly supported by the president of the Norwegian Press Association, who emphasised the constitutional right of freedom of speech/press.² As the conflict developed, this issue was narrowed and framed as a question of "we versus them (Muslims)" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:6).

On 10 February, the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, arranged a meeting in his office with representatives of Muslim organisations and *Magazinet's* editor. Selbekk apologised for what he described as the unintentional humiliation of Islam. The Government insisted that its intention was never to apologise for freedom of speech, but the reconciliation meeting still appeared politically staged. "Arranging the meeting at the Minister's office might have contributed to some misunderstandings about the Government's role in this matter", Foreign Secretary Raymond Johansen conceded at a meeting in June 2007 (journalisten.no).³

2 Historical and political background

The present Norwegian (majority) government is a coalition of the Labour Party, the Socialist Left and the Centre Party. Some public opinion polls show that the Labour Party drew members from the self-proclaimed liberals, the Progress Party ("Fremskrittspartiet"), to be the largest party. The Progress Party is often characterised as a radical right-wing populist party in academic literature and is a close relative of the Danish People's Party (Steien, 2007a:42). Established in 1973, it is considered to have the most restrictive views on immigration and to be the most xenophobic of all the political parties represented in the Parliament (ibid.). During the cartoons controversy, newspapers questioned whether this party would profit from the conflict.

2.1 The concepts of ethnicity, minority and identity

Over the past 35-40 years, Norway has become an increasingly multicultural country, in which approximately 6 % of the population of 4.65 million comes from non-Western countries (285,300). Approximately 125,000 non-Western immigrants live in or near Oslo. "Statistics Norway" (SSB) has no overview of how many Norwegian residents are Muslims, but registered membership in Islamic congregations was 72,000 in 2006; while in 1990 the number was 19,000⁴; this constitutes about 20 % of members of organised religious groups outside the Church of Norway. Before the 1970s, Norway had a relatively homogenous society, and initially immigrants were referred to as "foreign or guest labourers", which was later changed to "our new fellow citizens", and finally – a concept which is often used today – Norwegians of (for example) Pakistani origin or background with a "hyphenated-identity": Norwegian-Pakistani, Norwegian-Somali, etc., implying a dual or hybrid identity. In the beginning, the "new fellow citizens" were treated with a mixture of curiosity and tolerance; Norway needed them in the labour force (ibid.). In the mid-1980s there was a paradigm change; the focus became more problem- and difference-oriented (Eide, 2003:109). At the same time, the concept of "ethnic Norwegian" became commonplace. This has been very apparent in police crime reports, where during the 1990s the perpetrator's or victim's ethnic background was always mentioned if he was of other than Norwegian ancestry, even if he was second-generation, born and raised in Norway. The same seems to be the case in the media when problems arise. In 1997, a research report initiated by The Norwegian Union of Journalists concluded that, for example, readers of the tabloid newspaper *VG* encountered a criminal foreigner in every third article dealing with immigrants (Lindstad & Fjeldstad, 1997). The same tendencies were apparent in *Dagbladet* and *TV2* (every fourth article, report, etc.). In terms of reporting about minorities: crime was the dominant image, newspapers wrote a lot about racism (and the negative attitudes of political extremists), but almost nothing about discrimination, and Norwegians were described as active, while the minority represented passivity. With some exceptions the report concluded that the media present minorities as groups with a limited repertoire, as if the media had its own minority ghetto (ibid.). There seems to be a tendency for the media to use culture as an explanatory concept when discussing minority groups and crime, and such a model may support racism, if it is used only to describe "them", and not also "us". This is a relevant aspect of the Government's recent concern about the issue of arranged marriages, and its desire to implement age limits for marriages with partners from the countries of origin. As of yet, considerable discussion has not produced agreement on resolving this delicate issue. Concern about this issue, as well as about the wearing of the hijab (veil), female circumcision, and whether to forbid marriage between cousins, tends to dominate media coverage of minorities (ibid.).

When journalists wrote about other cultures in the past, it was often in terms of views shaped by the colonial heritage, and it was hard to check stories. Now the "other" culture is part of the new cultural reality in Norway, and we live in a "global

1. Four other Islam-critical books were published with a similar approach to Islam and (Norwegian) policy on integration in 2006 and 2007, most of them heavily covered in the media.
2. Article 100 of the Norwegian Constitution. This Article was strengthened in 2004.
3. <http://www.journalisten.no/story/47320> [11.06.2007]
4. <http://www.ssb.no/emner/07/02/10/trosamf/tab-2006-12-18-01.html> [17.02.07]

village" where news circulates rapidly through electronic media and via satellites. Elisabeth Eide describes Norwegian residents of non-Western backgrounds as "internal Others" when she analyses contemporary feature stories on minorities in Norway based on the degree of "their" Norwegian identity (Eide, 2002:9, 204). The media's presentation of Europe's "internal Others" has met with criticism from researchers who are open to new ways of thinking and describing society, as well as from minority groups (Steien, 2007b). "The most important contribution for research is to construct an analytical and professional view of culture, ethnicity and identity so it will not be left to private interests and political assurances", Iben Jensen writes (Jensen, 2000:21). She affirms that professional competence and knowledge are weapons in the struggle against hostility towards immigrants. Her view corresponds with the approach of Peace versus War Journalism, which emphasises the importance of conflict analysis skills as an essential tool for journalists covering conflicts, as well as when writing about conflicting interests (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:34). Gadi Wolfsfeld describes the shift in focus from conflict to peace as something that "leads one down a somewhat different theoretical path" (Wolfsfeld, 2004:2).

At the beginning of the Mohammed cartoons conflict, "everyone" seemed to agree that publishing the cartoons fell within every newspaper's constitutional right to freedom of speech. This right is, of course, a basic prerequisite of all free media, also highlighted as Article 1.1. of the Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press. Ethical journalistic practice also means "to allow different views to be expressed" (Article 1.2.), and this is also one of the principles of Peace Journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The Code emphasises the use of "breadth and relevant sources" (Article 3.2.). Newspapers have pledged to obey this code, and many of them have even supplemented it with further ethical in-house rules.

3 Approaches

In analysing Norwegian newspaper coverage of the cartoons conflict, I tried to approach the topic within the context of Peace versus War Journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). Peace Journalism offers a (practical) roadmap for journalists to report in a way that does not support violence, but is not basically a theoretical approach or tool for media (text) analysis. Yet based on this perspective, I have investigated how journalists relate to the complexity of conflict and whether it is possible to identify patterns of "War and Peace Journalism" in news reports and overall coverage. Do articles survey the background and causes of conflict, or are reports "black/white", independently of whether stories are about domestic or international events? Do newspapers contribute to escalating conflict or to reconciliation? Is the main discourse one of a "clash of civilisations, of "us" versus "them", e.g., the Orient versus the West in geography, culture and religion, as well as the Orient *in* the West ("internal Others")? Lynch & McGoldrick assert that most journalism, although regarding itself as neutral and objective, is actually "war journalism", biased in favour of war and conflict as problem solutions (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). By comparing six selected newspapers' parallel reports/reportage on the same events between 15 January and 15 March 2006, I have tried to discover differences and characteristic features in patterns of agendas, traditions and influences. In these two months the newspapers published more than 900 stories and different sorts of opinion pieces and even more pictures on the Mohammed cartoons controversy. The six chosen papers represent the largest national quality daily newspapers (*Aftenposten*, *Dagsavisen*, *Dagens Næringsliv*), the two tabloid newspapers *Dagbladet* and *VG*, and the largest local newspaper, *Aften*.

4 The backdrop of war journalism

Peace versus War Journalism might be regarded as a perspective on the discourse of ideologies (see below), as part of a propaganda discourse and also as part of a political one. I chose this perspective because it highlights a way of thinking that is often lost sight of behind sensationalistic front pages and celebrity journalism. In this connection, Noam Chomsky addresses an important question: "The role of the media in contemporary politics forces us to ask: What kind of world and what kind of society do we want to live in, and in particular, in what sense of democracy do we want to be a democratic society" (Chomsky, 2002:9).

Johan Galtung, the "father" of Peace Journalism, implies that, in general, there are two ways of looking at conflict, the "high road" and the "low road", "depending on whether the focus is on the conflict and its peaceful transformation, or on the meta-conflict that comes after the root conflict, created by violence and war and the question of who wins" (Galtung, 1997, Ch.5:1).¹ The low road, as Galtung implies, is dominant in the media, it "sees a conflict as a battle and the battle as a sports arena and gladiator circus" ... "War journalism has sports journalism and court journalism, as models" (ibid.:1). The high road, however, is the road of Peace Journalism, focusing on violence-free conflict transformation. It should be modelled on health journalism; the focus is not on the disease itself, but on how to overcome it. Galtung reverses a popular saying when he points out that, "... the first victim in a war is not truth, that is only the second victim. The first victim is, of course, peace" (ibid.:1).²

1. <http://www.cnetwork.ca/programs/PeaceJournalism.htm>(Media: (Peace Journalism, ch. 5, p.1) [20.02.07]

2. The next two victims Galtung adds to the first two are *people* and *solutions* (ibid.:3).

Although the vague phrase "Peace Journalism" is understood by many as a way to advocate peace which contrasts with the journalistic ideals of neutrality and objectivity and may also imply that the journalist is not supposed to have her or his own political agenda, Lynch and McGoldrick suggest that the way to interpret it is rather as "giving peace a chance" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:xxi).

According to Galtung, Peace Journalism is a "journalism of attachment to all actual and potential victims; War Journalism only attaches to 'our' side" (Galtung, 1997:4). Wilhelm Kempf shows that practising Peace Journalism requires much of the journalist: liberation from the institutional, economic and sociological constraints of news production, and a profound knowledge and understanding of both conflict theory and the particular conflict (Kempf, 2003:10-11). While the news media require immediacy, a successful peace process or conflict solution requires patience. It also requires a minimal understanding of (the needs of) the other party, "but the news media reinforce ethnocentrism and hostility towards adversaries" (Wolfsfeld, 2004:2). Wolfsfeld holds that journalists have an ethical obligation to encourage reconciliation between hostile populations. At the very least, journalists should do no harm (ibid.:5). "The goals for journalism working in conflict-ridden areas should be to provide as much information as possible about the roots of the problem and to encourage a rational public debate concerning the various options for ending it" (ibid.:5).

Furthermore, Peace Journalism demands much in terms of resources, "... the number of specialist correspondents is constantly decreasing, and the trend of parachute journalism is becoming more and more prevalent" (Sjøvaag, 2005:55). At the end of the 1990s the foreign reports are fewer, the number of correspondents is decreasing, while sports reports are part of every broadcasting news report, and the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK's) weekly foreign affairs special is broadcast after 11 p.m.

The 2003 research project "Power and Democracy" concluded in the chapter "The New Class Society": "The vast majority of the immigrant population does not participate in the Norwegian political system, and this will after some time constitute a new underclass within low paid jobs or outside the labour market".¹ This group's lack of influence and its over-representation in the media can have negative effects, because it fails to meet the public's need for information and an understanding of the "truth" that reflects the different aspects of a multicultural, multiethnic and multiracial society; something we may call a 'new identity' or modernity. The main problem may be not a lack of minority participation, but rather how minorities are ambivalently portrayed, in terms of contrasts and paradoxes – with regard to the majority (Røgilds, 2003:39). One of the discussants in my sample, Iffit Z. Qureshi, compares participating in TV panels to being the defendant in a trial, as if you were accused of a crime:

Muslims are invited to discussions with well-articulated politicians and leaders of organisations, who profit from enemy images of Muslims. Such programs become a sort of trial where Muslims' loyalty to Norwegian democracy and Norwegian values is being questioned (*Aftenposten*, 3 March 2006).

Her experience may suggest an explanation of why Muslims are underrepresented in the media, even in regard to issues concerning them directly, like the cartoons controversy (Table 2). The prevalence of stereotypical frames in the media also makes many minority representatives reluctant to participate and raises a fundamental question: are the media ethnically and racially biased, and if they are, how is this expressed (Røgilds, 2003:42)?

I view the concept of War versus Peace Journalism as a major *critical* media discourse, a way to encourage critical journalism, and the intention of such a discourse/journalism is to survey and unmask power relations in society and formulate normative perspectives from which the researcher/journalist may criticise these relations and propose new approaches for bringing about social change (Steien, 2007a:43). Two concepts important in the explanations of discourse analysis are "power" and "ideology" and how discourse is related to social power (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999:11). These two components of the critical discourse approach form the background of my categories of War and Peace Journalism, since both relate to power structures and (political) ideologies, although they are expressed in different ways.

4. 1 The ideological inheritance

Widely shared conceptions of Norwegian identity have been challenged during the last few decades because of immigration. This challenge attracts attention, for example, when a dominant group wants to promote its interests: "... many ideologies develop precisely in order to sustain, legitimate or manage group conflicts, as well as relationships of power and dominance" (van Dijk, 1998:24). The cognitive structures of ideology are important because social practices presuppose a wide range of socio-cultural and group-specific beliefs or social representations. And this again may be directly expressed in discourse. Teun A. van Dijk takes as an example a prejudiced opinion, "women are less competent" than men, to illustrate what he calls a 'male chauvinist ideology' (ibid.:24). "Muslim mass identity is an anti-thesis to kindness" (*Aftenposten*, 16 February) is an example of a claim informed by a racist ideology (using the definitions in the UN Convention).

1. http://odin.dep.no/odinarkiv/english/brundtland_III/ud/032005-990424/dok-bu.html, [11.12.2006]

"Ideologies organise specific group attitudes; these attitudes may be used in the formation of personal opinions as represented in models; and these personal opinions may finally be expressed in text and talk. This is the usual, indirect way of ideological expression in discourse" (van Dijk, 1998:25).

4. 2 The relativism of racism

In discussing the concept of stereotyping ethnic minorities, Ylva Brune explains stereotypes as an aspect of discursive strategies: "They are powerful tools for symbolic power and symbolic violence, and they perform where the distribution of power is unequal" (Brune, 2003:51). She describes how stereotypes work in a bipolar manner, using dichotomies of language or culture to identify or construct inequality between people through simplifications and reductions. The "other" is characterised, for example, by its religion, and thereby the group is reduced to being identical with the religion. In terms of War Journalism, this is "'us-them' journalism ..., voice for 'us'" (Lynch &McGoldrick, 2005:6). This also has an impact on the understanding of race: the modern concept of race is deconstructed from biology and skin colour, but constructed into a cultural concept (and then: religious). Throughout history, racism has always been specific and relative to its context. The context and character of the new racism enable it to be recognised.

4. 3 Racism recognised through the "law of commutation"

Three public intellectuals address an important issue regarding the Mohammed cartoons: Was the publication an expression of racism (*Dagbladet*, 22 February)? They refer to the drawing presenting an Oriental man/the Prophet with a turban, sabre and stripe like a criminal, covering his eyes, flanked by two women dressed in burkas concealing everything but their frightened eyes. Like the other motifs, the sabre and the turban "reflect a popular Oriental repertoire of clichés about Arab men as exotic, barbaric and untrustworthy" (ibid.). A revealing test of the cartoons' potential racist or ethnocentric dimension is to use the "law of commutation": replacing the Oriental man in the drawing with, for example, a Jew or a black. Doing so makes any racist content more visible. Another relevant test is to view the issue from the perspective that many of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims regard the cartoons crisis as a Western conspiracy directed at *them*, rather than as a case of the West defending its fundamental democratic right to free speech.

Another example of the discursive struggle for hegemony is provided by Samuel Huntington's theory of the "clash of civilisations", which was often alluded to in editorials and comments during the cartoons controversy and also appeared as an underlying narrative in articles (Huntington, 1993). Huntington believes that future conflicts will not arise from differences in ideologies or economic systems, but instead from cultural differences between civilisations. This follows from his notion that national identities are losing their power to unite people and are being superseded by cultural identities based on history, language, tradition and religion (ibid.).

The opponents of this theory often use questions about power and social conditions and the critique of Western double standards to explain the strong reactions to an issue like the Mohammed cartoons. The clash-of-civilisations approach is also similar to the analyses of War Journalism: "two parties... 'us-them'-journalism... expose 'their' untruths ..." (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:6). An alternative approach could be that of "clashes of humiliation" (Lindner, 2006).

4. 4 Clashes of humiliation

Evelin Lindner has done a social-psychological study of the role of *humiliation* in human conflict. From the acts of humiliation in Nazi Germany or the attacks on the Twin Towers in New York to intentional humiliations such as those committed at the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, she examines how little-understood, often overlooked emotions can spark uprisings, conflict and war. "When respect and recognition fail, those who feel victimised are prone to highlight differences to 'justify' rifts caused by humiliation. *Clashes of civilisations* are not the problem, but *clashes of humiliations* are" (Lindner, 2006:172). With respect to covering Islam, Edward Said describes how knowledge about Islam and Islamic peoples has generally developed not only from dominance and confrontation, but also from cultural antipathy, which might be understood as humiliation (Said, 1997:163). The tendency to legitimate negative approaches towards Islam and to downgrade Islamic peoples has been even more apparent since 9/11, because of an international paradigm shift caused by the "war on terror", and concretised through the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. To "see 'them' as the problem" is war and violence oriented journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:6). Lindner's critical approach to the "clash of civilisations" approach and her emphasis on the emotional state of humiliation are relevant for the Mohammed cartoons controversy, both in terms of how the cartoons were received and how the media covered the issue. *Dagens Næringsliv* published a feature story on the occurrence of the word "humiliation" (verb: to humiliate) and synonyms like "violation" (to violate) and "insult" (to insult) in the 20 largest newspapers, from 27 January until 9 February for every year since 2000, whereby the frequency was 30-50 in the first six years, but increased to almost 300 in 2006. Use of the word "insult" increased from 40 to 150 (*DN*, 11/12 February). The title of the feature story is "Time for humiliation".

5 Methodology

Barbara Gentikov asserts that to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to media resources is "a beautiful ideal, but unfortunately, it does not function practically" (Gentikov, 2005:35). Nevertheless, to unmask the power structures or struggles underlying newspapers' choice of viewpoints and sources, I find both approaches useful. It is difficult to establish categories of War, Peace (and nuanced) Journalism within and among my substantial and comprehensive sample without counting the articles, as well as indicating who is speaking. Since the concept of War and Peace Journalism is constructed as a practical tool for journalists in the field and not primarily as a theoretical discourse approach, the categories are based on Galtung's definitions and my judgements and interpretations. There may be a third, middle "way": journalism characterised as "neither-nor": e.g., some journalists may balance their stories or write background articles, or their reports may contain elements of both Peace and War Journalism. Therefore, I have introduced a third category of journalism, Nuanced Journalism, as illustrated, for example, by informative articles about religion.

"Giving a voice to all parties ..." is one of the ideals of Peace Journalism (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:6). Hence, I have recorded the numbers of sources by gender and minority versus majority background. War Journalism is described by elite-orientation, and I have also classified the sources as expert/politician and grass-root sources.

5.1 Implications of the tables

The quantitative tables show the numbers of articles distributed in different categories of genres (Table 1), the representation of sources (Table 2), the occurrence of War versus Peace or Nuanced Journalism in news reports and reportage, 31 January – 14 February 2006, the period when Norway was "almost" at war (Table 3).¹

	Front page	Editorial	Comment	Opinions, letters	News report	News reportage	Background	Briefs	Inquiries	Number of reports/opinions
<i>Aften</i>	0	1	2	2	5	1	0	19	1	31
<i>Aftenposten</i>	14	7	50	49	65	25	7	49	2	268
<i>Dagbladet</i>	7	7	27	85	46	18	2	21	1	214
<i>Dagens Næringsliv</i>	2	5	11	3	19	6	1	16	0	63
<i>Dagsavisen</i>	12	4	16	18	47	39	2	25	3	166
<i>VG</i>	7	5	26	18	65	22	1	14	0	158
Total	42	29	132	175	247	111	13	144	7	900

Table 1: Overview of the newspapers' distribution of articles and genres

6 Giving voice to the voiceless

The representation of sources is a central aspect of Peace Journalism, and German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas emphasises the importance of a well-functioning public discourse as an essential foundation of democracy. His perspective presupposes a public that has knowledge of and access to forums for discussion and debate. As an overall perspective, Peace Journalism emphasises a people-orientation, "focusing on the suffering of women, aged, children, giving voices to the voiceless" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:6). The relevance of the latter aspect is shown by my sample; the lack of minority voices is apparent in the debate "space", the comments and newspaper sources are elite-oriented, and the lack of female sources is generally apparent (Table 2). The unbalanced representation is not, for example, a basic feminist issue, but rather a question of pluralism and fair representation in a matter that concerns men as well as women, majority as well as minority residents. I find the same aspect to be relevant concerning levels or priorities of sources; in hardcore news, like reports on war and conflict, there is a tradition of privileging male sources (Zilliacus-Tikkanen, 1997:70,147-148).

Of the total number of sources (753) in every genre of stories in the research materials, 80 % are male, 20 % female; *Dagsavisen* has an average of 25 % female sources, *Aftenposten*, with the largest total number of articles (268), has 16

1. The tables are also presented in my thesis (June 2007).

% female sources, *Aften* does not have a single female source. This is obvious due to the (low) number of female sources in the news stories (and in photographs), as well as their low participation in the opinion materials.

Sources	<i>Aften</i>	<i>Aftenposten</i>	<i>Dagbladet</i>	<i>DN</i>	<i>Dagsavisen</i>	<i>VG</i>	Total
Male sources	15	166	97	42	163	122	605
Majority sources	4	120	65	33	93	87	402
Minority sources	11	46	32	13	70	35	207
Expert, politician	14	145	80	39	124	110	512
Grassroot	1	21	17	0	36	12	87
Female sources	0	32	28	11	50	27	148
Majority sources	0	28	21	11	40	24	124
Minority sources	0	4	7	0	10	3	24
Expert/politician	0	20	19	11	38	20	108
Grassroot	0	12	9	0	12	7	40

Table 2: Sources

The people-orientation approach can also be transferred to the grassroots representatives, who, as illustrated above, constitute 17 % of the sources and actually represent many of the interviewees in short inquiries. When conflicts like the Mohammed cartoons controversy cause an international crisis, it is natural to encounter a high representation of politicians and experts in the columns, as well as ones with a minority background; politicians and experts constitute 82 % of the sources. This indicates an elite-orientation in the coverage of the cartoons crisis, which is also characteristic of War Journalism, although I do not mean to imply that all coverage with such a category of sources is war-oriented. Table 2 shows that 34 % of the male and 15 % of the female sources have a minority background. The relatively high representation of male sources with a minority background in the news stories is probably due to the nature of the issue; many were actors and/or experts on the Mohammed cartoons controversy (Steien, 2007a:46).¹ If the newspapers' aim is to contribute to dialogue and finding peaceful solutions to conflicts like this, one way to do this is to present voices, opinions and images that differ from those of the extremists (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005).

6. 1 The voice of an "ideal immigrant"

Shazad Rana comments in *VG* on Islam's own intolerance (*VG*, 15 February) and in *Aftenposten*, 7 February, where he suggests eliminating the Article on obligatory religious stipulations in schools and kindergartens. The comment is accompanied by a picture of the Danish Imam, Abu Laban, raising his right hand in a gesture suggesting the Hitler salute while giving a speech. The image evokes what the German intellectual Hans Magnus Enzensberger describes in an essay as an example of "men of horror" or "radical losers" (Enzensberger, 2006). This is a powerful demonstration of the clash of civilisations; even if the comments are differentiated and moderate, pictures of aggressive, angry demonstrators burning flags, shaking their fists, etc., often accompany them. On 14 February, Rana is interviewed in *Dagbladet*, and the headline is: "The ideal immigrant criticises the government: (They) should never have apologised" (*Dagbladet*, 14 February). He is an example of the new 'fellow citizen' whom "we" approve of; he has assimilated "our" values, is even married to a Norwegian and likes skiing: He stands in contrast to those who wear ethnic clothing, marry within their ethnic group, and react against the cartoons: "The society's premise is that Muslims must 'modernise', i.e. become 'Norwegian'", Anne Sofie Roald writes (Roald, 2005:223). Dutch citizen Ayaan Hirsi Ali launches her book, *The Caged Virgin. Emancipation Proclamation for Women and Islam* in the Norwegian edition, and this is covered in the different newspapers. She is known as an uncompromising opponent of Islam and was a close friend of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who was murdered because of his stands on the same issue.² *DN* presents news about Ali three times, as their only female minority representative. As these examples sug-

1. In my thesis I also counted ethnic and gender representation in the opinion samples (editorials, comments, analysis, debate, reader's letters, etc.): 18 % of the participants are women, 12 % of the total number of 216 comments by public intellectuals have a non-Norwegian background (26), and the unsigned editorials are not counted here, although we assume that they are rarely written by women and/or minority representatives, since the editors on most levels are male. In the 915 published photographs men constitute almost 640 of the subjects, women 135 (mixed 15), whether in single images, small groups or crowds. The percentages are 80 % men, 15 % women, with illustrations, caricatures, etc. making up the remainder (Steien 2007b).
2. Karlsen & Winther point out that Theo van Gogh is wrongly described as a "knight of free speech". A regrettable aspect of his campaign was his reference to Muslims as "goat-fuckers" (Karlsen & Winther, 2006:60).

gest, "Conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have, or think they have, incompatible goals, needs and interests" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:34).

7 Attitudes in news reports and reportage

VG describes the attacks in the Middle East as a "Mob Amok" (6 February), while *Dagsavisen's* headline of the same day is "Violence Never Acceptable". They deal with the same event, but from different angles or perspectives. The journalist's or the editor's choice of perspective is part of the narrative. "The slant ... the psychological, sociological and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes, may range from neutral to highly charged/slanted" (Chatman, 1990:143). Wilhelm Kempf describes the consequences of such ramifications: "... journalists appoint themselves judges of who is good or evil in the world, and ... they place moral pressure on the international community to take sides" (Kempf, 2002:59). *VG* offers a narrative consistent with a War Journalism approach, while *Dagsavisen* takes a stance against violence, thus aligning with Peace Journalism.

Some 63 % of *VG's* (news) stories (Table 3) (and 57 % of their opinion materials) during the research period fall within the category of War Journalism, recognisable by its conflict implications. In contrast to this approach, "They should ... focus on suffering, expose untruths on all sides, explain the background, highlight peace initiatives and stop demonising one side while glorifying the other" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:III). The lower percentage of War Journalism in the other newspapers may be explained by their use of reports by their own correspondents in the Middle East, absent in *VG*.

	<i>Aften</i>	<i>Aftenposten</i>	<i>Dagbladet</i>	<i>DN</i>	<i>Dagsavisen</i>	<i>VG</i>	Total
War Journalism	0	27 % (19)	57 % (24)	23 % (3)	36 % (23)	63 % (24)	39 % (90)
Peace Journalism	33 % (1)	19 % (13)	14 % (6)	8 % (1)	12 % (8)	8 % (3)	15 % (35)
Nuanced Journalism	67 % (2)	54 % (37)	29 % (12)	69 % (9)	52 % (33)	29 % (11)	46 % (104)
Total	100 % (3)	100 % (69)	100 % (42)	100 % (13)	100 % (64)	100 % (38)	100 % (229)

Table 3: War, Peace, Nuanced Journalism, 31/01 – 14/02/2006

7.1 The "point of no return"

"Norwegian flags burnt as a protest" (*Aftenposten*, front page, 31 January). A picture by Damir Sagoli/Reuters is a front-page photograph in *Aftenposten* and *Dagsavisen*, and is used by *VG*, *DN* and *Dagbladet* in connection with their news stories. This provides an example of the presses' use of a particular provocative image acquired from a news agency. The picture shows eight angry men, two of them very clearly raising their fists, crying out or shouting while burning a copy of a Norwegian flag. The flag is a strong national symbol in Norway, which can look back on only 102 years of independence; it is displayed on national holidays, and the colours red, blue and white were chosen to emphasise ties to democracies like France, The Netherlands, the UK and the USA. The demonstrators were not just burning a multicoloured cloth rectangle, but also an image of democracy! This picture, as well as several others subsequently circulated by the press, also functions as a *metonym*: an element (e.g., flag burning) stands for a whole (the "unfair" conflict with and rage against freedom of speech in the West). It also evokes Enzensberger's "men of horror" or "radical losers" and is meant to disturb, shock and probably "move" the viewer. Burning the flag may also arouse a sense of humiliation, which is probably one of the reasons for doing this. A week later, demonstrators removed the Norwegian Coat of Arms, one of the oldest in Europe, from the embassy in Teheran and tried to destroy it. This also had an impact on viewers/readers in Norway. "Don't burn our flag!" is *VG's* headline, referring to Norwegian Muslim politicians (*VG* 31, January). Actually none of the three Muslims is saying this or "condemning [the burning]", as *VG* writes, they were rather commenting on how the acts of a few Norwegians (the editor of *Magazinet*) can harm a whole nation (Norway). Inconsistencies between headlines, titles and an article's content contribute to conflict escalation; if the statements by the interviewees are not strong enough, the newspaper "helps" them by adding emphasis. The same discrepancy is also present in *Dagbladet*: "... [are] threatening terrorism". Correspondent Yngvil Mortensen writes: "Most Palestinians with whom *Dagbladet* has spoken feel that their religion has been dragged down into the mud by the way the Prophet is portrayed, but they do not express any thoughts of revenge ... 'you do not achieve anything by using violence', some women say" (*Dagbladet*, 31 January). Both *VG* and *Dagbladet's* headlines are examples of War Journalism. Words like "terrorism" and "condemnation" connote conflict and evoke negative emotions – pathos. These are words that Lynch & McGoldrick warn against because of the simplification and stereotypes they encourage (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005:30). The message is emphasised by the photograph: "... an event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been had one never seen the photographs" (Sontag, 2003:94). Using the same Reuters picture on its front page (and inside the newspaper), *Dagsavisen* highlights Western responses to the recent outcomes of the Palestinian elections, which Hamas won: "Threatening to stop aid to Palestine". In this context, "we" (Norway, EU and the West) are still able to act against "them", to strike at their vulnerable economy as a punishment

for voting for the "wrong" political party (Hamas) in their democratic elections two weeks before. This economic boycott became, incidentally, a reality for a year. Norway was the first Western country to repeal the embargo in March 2007.

The particular photograph of the angry, flag-burning men was reproduced seven times during the cartoons controversy and was the first of a series of similar photographs from Palestine via Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Sarajevo (Bosnia). "... after repeated exposure it becomes less real," Susan Sontag writes (Sontag, 2003:94), but perhaps it becomes more natural as it is absorbed into memory? *Dagsavisen's* front-page headline on 1 February is: "Flaming rage". *VG* uses a section of the burning flag-picture as a vignette on the pages dealing with the conflict, as a cursor, "The Mohammed riot". By linking the coverage of the Mohammed cartoons crisis with a vignette focused on fire, *VG* transformed the crisis into a *metaphor*, as though the entire conflict were essentially similar, at least the parts occurring "down there". The dangerous, uncontrolled fire also becomes a symbol of the gap between "them" and "us" as the party of civilisation. It is an example of the underlying message about the clash of civilisations. The image of the dangerous, irrational, wild and unpredictable situation is reinforced by photographs of men with Palestinian scarves or masks concealing everything but their eyes, allegedly threatening further actions, such as bomb attacks (*Aftenposten*, 31 January). Variations on this theme circulated during the following days, accompanied by more serious threats against Norway and Denmark: "The radical, Shiite-Muslim Hizbollah movement in Lebanon indicated yesterday that the cartoons of the Prophet might lead to suicide actions in Norway and Denmark" (*Dagsavisen*, 3 February). Norwegian NGOs withdrew their staffs from the Palestinian territories and Darfur in Sudan.

7. 2 Two different events and how the newspapers covered them

In the study "Our Hero and Their Unworthy Victim", Gro Mette Moen has compared four newspapers' coverage of two events that took place on 5 February 2006 (Moen, 2006).

When the demonstrations against Norway and Denmark took place in Syria on the 4th of February, Even Nord Rydningen, a Norwegian student in Damascus, suddenly found himself in a threatening situation, and saved his life, according to his report, by claiming that he was Swedish not Norwegian. At the same time, a Norwegian resident of Palestinian origin, Anuar Ahmad, was attacked by a mob in Skien, Norway. Stabbed in the neck, he suffered serious injury. These two events were covered very differently in the newspapers. *Dagbladet* did not even mention Anuar Ahmad at all. "Norwegian Even (22) CALMED raging Muslims" was on the front page of *Dagbladet*, 6 February, while on the same day *VG* made this comment: "Said he was Swedish, SAVED HIS LIFE". The front-page pictures in *Dagbladet* gave an overall view of the demonstration from a bird's-eye perspective, while a portrait of Even, partly covering his face, is superimposed on the same picture and presented in a larger format, together with an additional report on pages 6 and 7. The journalist, who was not present at the events in Syria, wrote his story from England. In the front-page picture in *VG*, Even is standing in front of the burning Norwegian embassy, and a subtitle informs the reader: "Boycott of Norwegian salmon and cheese". *VG*, on the same day, devotes nine pages to the events, which *VG's* vignette refers to as the "Mohammed rages". The day before, 5 February, *VG* also focuses on a young Norwegian student, Silje (21), who "had to flee for her life" in Damascus: "FUGITIVE from Muslim revenge". On the 6th, *VG's* reporter (one of the few journalists with a minority background in the Norwegian media) presents an interview (from Oslo) with Even (in Damascus); the photographs used in the report are Even's own pictures of the dramatic events in Damascus. The caption, though, comes from *VG's* newsroom: "RAN AMOK: These are Even Nord's own pictures from where the mob ran amok ...". The journalist asks at the end of the story: "Was it painful to see the Norwegian embassy being burnt?" Even answers: "I did not see Norway burning. What I saw was demonstrations like an oppressed gang that vented a great amount of frustration, all at the same time. What they did was not in their own best interest". There are discrepancies between how *VG* treats the report in its headlines, captions and slant, and what Even actually describes in the interview: "... journalists have little faith in human nature, suspecting the worst and finding it" (Johnsson-Cartee, 2006:286). Even's answer is characterised by an ethos, and he wants to place the events in a different context than the pathos communicated by *VG*. This is also an example of what Oddgeir Tveiten describes as the core of journalism; although we live in a world of globalisation, the essence of journalism will always be the *local* perspective (Tveiten, 2007:33). In response to events of international or global significance, Norwegian newspapers always look for the Norwegian, the person who (hopefully) can be the eyewitness and report (through emotion/pathos) what really happened (to him or her). Although it may not have any implications for Norway's situation, it becomes part of the national and Norwegian narrative, as well as part of an ethnocentric discourse, and frequently an example of War Journalism.

On page 7, *VG* gives only a brief report about what happened in Skien: "Stabbed a Palestinian" is the headline. The introduction is as follows: "The Palestinian (35) was surprised by four Norwegians outside his house. 'Why are you burning Norwegian flags', was the only thing he heard before he was stabbed in the neck". The following (short) text is about the police department, which characterised the incident as an act of drunken rowdies. Ahmad is never mentioned by name, but rather as the "stabbing victim". He remains anonymous and is always referred to only indirectly: "... the minority Other is seldom invited to represent herself, but is often represented by (self-styled) experts or professionals of majority origin who speak about the Other, or on her behalf" (Eide, 2002:208).

Dagsavisen handles Anuar Ahmad's threatening and dangerous experience differently: The report covers the entire page, and Anuar Ahmad tells his story in his own words, describing in detail what happened to him. The criminal act also relates to another story in the newspaper, in which Norwegian Muslims are interviewed about their fear of reprisals after the attack on Anuar Ahmad: "When a man has been stabbed, of course I am afraid that right-wing extremist groups might become violent and not only be threatening to act violently," states Mohammad Hamdan, the leader of the Islamic Council (*Dagsavisen*, 6 February). Nevertheless, Anuar Ahmad's non-Norwegian origin is mentioned in all the reports about him. In *VG*, the two events produce two very different ways of portraying the main characters: Even is a (Norwegian) hero from "up here" in a dangerous environment (Syria) "down there", although he is never physically injured (Eide, 2002). Anuar Ahmad is a refugee and foreigner in Norway, although he is a Norwegian citizen, and although he is seriously injured, he is not that newsworthy for *VG*. *VG* does not consider it important that the attacks on him were directly related to events in the Middle East and thus could have consequences for other refugee and minority populations in Norway, as well as for relations between majority and minority peoples. According to *Dagsavisen*, "the police regard the incident solely as an episode of ordinary drunkenness and a violent episode". This minimises the severity of the criminal act. Using the "law of commutation" and replacing Anuar with a celebrity, a woman or a child as the victim could provide some sense of how the coverage and priority accorded to the story might have differed had the victim not been an immigrant. Would the police have trivialised the criminal act as merely due to "drunkenness" without such a claim being questioned by the press? The coverage uses euphemisms and litotes; the police minimise a serious criminal and probably racist event, and the newspaper refers to it using a *litotes* (the opposite of a hyperbole, e.g., 'it's not that bad'), and the entire story is told using euphemisms. There will always be disagreement about news priorities in newsrooms, and both of these stories deserve thorough coverage. Which of the stories will (probably) have the most serious impact on Norwegian relations/society – Even's courage in Syria, or a racist assault and stabbing in Norway? The first story is an eminent example of War Journalism in *VG*, and the second an example of Peace Journalism in *Dagsavisen* (cf. Galtung, Lynch & McGoldrick).

Noam Chomsky has analysed the coverage of wars and conflicts in the US press and describes a system of propaganda, "portraying people abused in enemy states as *worthy* victims, while those treated with equal or greater severity by their own government of clients will be *unworthy*" (Chomsky, 1988:37). Similarly, except for *Dagsavisen's* report, Anuar is treated as an unworthy victim, nameless, not as newsworthy as Even, who is portrayed as both a worthy victim and a hero.

7.3 Reconciliation meeting

"Peace culture is not a state of eternal harmony. But it is a sort of social contract which enables society members to deal with (internal and external) conflicts within a cooperative environment" (Kempf, 2002:61). Kempf explains that:

"Open communication reduces the danger of misunderstandings. It enables parties to explore the interests behind the issues in a conflict, to elaborate a more adequate definition of what the real problem is that must be resolved and to optimise their contributions to resolving the problem" (ibid.:62).

Exactly one month after *Magazinet* editor Vebjørn Selbekk published the Mohammed cartoons, after four weeks of agony, death threats against Selbekk, two weeks of mob violence, flag and embassy burnings in the Middle East, attacks in Afghanistan and endless national and international debate and discussion, the Norwegian conflict was resolved on 10 February in the office of Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, Norwegian Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion. "Muslims forgive Norway" (*Dagsavisen*, 11 February) and "Kr.F-network solved the problem" (*Aftenposten*, 11 February) were typical headlines on the next day.¹ Both of these newspapers emphasised the contributions of the mediators (high-profile Christian and Muslim men), and in the headline of a sub-article *Aftenposten* describes the meeting as "An historic reconciliation". The editor regrets the impact of the cartoons, but not that he exercised his right to free speech by publishing them. The Muslim representative at the meeting, Mohammad Hamdan (leader of the Islamic Council), explains on the same day on *Al-Jazeera* that Norwegian Muslims accept Selbekk's apology: "In the coming days we will repeat this message through satellite channels in Muslim countries and call our contacts in the Middle East. We will ask Muslims all over the world to reject violence towards Norway" (*Dagsavisen*, 11 February). Except for occasional demonstrations and continued boycotts of Norwegian companies and products, the actions in the Middle East have now ended.

VG and *Dagbladet* covered the meeting differently. Both of the newspapers interviewed the leader of the Progress Party, Siv Jensen, who describes the government's acknowledgement of Selbekk's apology as an "unlucky muddle and cowardly behaviour towards authoritarian powers" and alludes to the realm of theatre when she describes the reconciliation meeting as a "Performance of cowardice" (*Dagbladet*, 11 February). Jensen asserts that the problem was not that Norway humiliated Muslims by permitting the publication of the cartoons, but rather the situation for non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East, who "every day fear for their lives and risk their lives because of their faith" (ibid.). *VG's* headline is: "Chastises the Government" (11 February). Siv Jensen and two other liberal politicians criticise Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre for heaping all the blame on just one editor (Selbekk). Jensen "demolishes" the Govern-

1. Kr. F. refers to the Christian Democratic Party.

ment's role before the "peace-compromise", which she describes as a collective excuse, although public opinion on the matter is divided. She asserts that, "violent demonstrators around the world don't give a damn about how much Selbekk or *Jyllands-Posten* apologise for their actions" (ibid.). The lack of reactions during the following days shows that Siv Jensen and *VG* were wrong in their predictions. *VG* (and *Dagbladet*) used the opportunity to advocate further conflict and pursued the "low road", presenting the reconciliation meeting as part of a struggle which was not over yet and implying that the conflict, represented as latent violence, was likely to continue rather than progress towards a peaceful solution (Galtung, 1997). "Violence breeds violence" is one of the most reliable predictors we know, and the challenge may be to break this regularity. "In the wake of violence there is not only the desire of the victim for revenge and retribution going back to the conflict, with a totally different outcome, there is also a desire of the victor for more victories: it tasted so sweet that addiction is just around the corner" (Galtung, 2004:186).

8 Conclusions

From the end of January to the middle of February 2006, it became clear that the Mohammed cartoons controversy had ceased to be a conflict between Denmark, Norway (the West) and the "Islamic world". It had instead become an international controversy and debate about some of the core values that the West – particularly Western journalists – claims to live by (Kunelius et al., 2007).

Peace Journalism is not yet a comprehensive tool for text or media analysis, and as an important approach to journalism it needs to be further developed and conceptualised to create suitable models for media analysis. My aim in exploring this perspective is to contribute to a deeper understanding of Peace versus War Journalism and of how these concepts inform daily news production when the media cover conflict.

VG and *Dagbladet* published a majority of the reports recognisable as War Journalism, while *Dagsavisen* and *Aftenposten* covered the event in news stories (and editorials and comments) from within a discourse of Peace or Nuanced, more balanced Journalism. The Progress Party probably gained additional support as a result of the incidents and their coverage. Using opinion polls which analyse changes in voter preferences over a five-year period, researchers conclude that "immigration restriction is the issue that, more than any other, increases the likelihood that a person will vote for the Progress Party", and: "Probably the events occurring during the Mohammed cartoons crisis explain the party's success" (*Dagbladet*, 14 March).¹ In March 2006, the Progress Party, with 30 % on InFact's party barometer, is actually larger than the Labour Party. One may allege that (some of) the newspapers' War Journalism has contributed to the party's current success.

The complexity of a heterogeneous society was highlighted throughout the cartoons crisis. It is easy to live with freedom of speech when everyone has a similar background, but this freedom becomes problematic in a heterogeneous context. The differences in interpretation can be exacerbated in the press by War Journalism, or the media could help harmonise them using Peace Journalism. The media coverage in news reports was characterised by a focus on the dramatic events occurring in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and the media approaches were mainly Nuanced, as well as War Journalism, varying depending on the newspaper. Although hardly any story promotes an escalation of conflict, a comprehensive overview of the news reports and reportage, including the choice and lack of sources/voices, angles, layout and presentation, suggests a high and rising temperature regarding Islam and its implications for multicultural coexistence in Norway, as well as in the rest of the world. The use of sources with a minority background and a lack of women as sources show that the newspapers (with a few exceptions) perpetuate existing attitudes and patterns in society instead of taking the Peace Journalism approach of creatively finding new sources and perspectives and possibly pointing to new solutions. It also seems to be easier to promote war and conflict and exploit stereotypes and present enemy images when newspapers do not have their own correspondents in the field, because newsrooms become more dependent on information and propaganda provided by others. The concept of a "clash of civilisations" became one of the key phrases in the conflict. Thus, despite the many different positions taken regarding its relevance, one can say that it operated as one of the most powerful general discourses of the entire conflict, an example of War Journalism. It was the implicit foundation of much of the coverage of the events in the Middle East, and was often introduced as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Kunelius et al., 2007). "It is possible to predict that if the discourse of 'clash' or 'war' gains more ground as the dominant explanation of the world, this will favour more fundamentalist tendencies" (ibid.). As the Fourth Estate, the press has a duty to contribute to improving the public's political analysis and social ethical consciousness, instead of or in addition to providing 'infotainment'. This is, perhaps, more important in order to further co-existence in a multicultural society, and in order to avoid conflict and support dialogue and mutual respect.

1. The author, Ottar Hellevik, is the head of research at the MMI, (the Institute of Market and Media Surveys).

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On the author: Solveig Steien (b. 1955) is a Norwegian journalist and part-time teacher at Oslo University College, Department of Journalism. In her thesis, "When Norway Was Almost at War, the Mohammed cartoons Controversy in Norwegian Newspapers" (June 2007), she scrutinized how six Norwegian national newspapers covered the Mohammed controversy in the early winter of 2006 and used an overall perspective of Peace and War journalism in her approach. Solveig Steien is a member of the International Department of the Norwegian Writers' Association.

Address: eMail: solveig.steien@gmail.com