

Branding Rights: The position of political cartoons in the securitisation of population groups in a democracy

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Abstract

Extending on notions of securitisation and how it challenges democracy, this paper uses Marshall McLuhan's tetrad of media effects within a social constructivist paradigm, to engage in an intertextual and intervisual analysis of political cartoons in Denmark. In doing so this paper illustrates how and why particular community groups within democracies can be targeted in 'speech acts' that subsequently pushes them into becoming securitised as possible threat groups within the democracy. The securitisation that takes place in democracies through these identified and analysed 'speech acts' embedded in political images are deconstructive features to promoting democratic rights, and must be understood and addressed at a structural level to instead promote desecuritisation.

Keywords

securitisation; democracy: social construction; political cartoons; democratic rights; plural society

1. Introduction

The structures of democratic governance that guide citizenship rights within the nation state do not align with the international laws and structures that guide human rights. These incongruences between constitutional rights within democratic nation states and the democratically informed normative human rights overseen by the international community, do not allow for the protection of individuals and communities that are positioned as refugees, migrant workers, illegal workers, citizens to failed states or other forms of minority groups. Such minority groups are at risk of being further disenfranchised through the processes of securitisation that are pushed into action by 'speech acts,' and reinforced or objected by elite interest groups, public opinion and political rhetoric. The securitisation of particular population groups within a democratic society therefore risks undermining the principles on which a democratic society is built and governed.

Within the field of security studies, the process of securitisation refers to the emergence of an existential threat as a result of the politicisation of particular threats (Williams 2003, McDonald 2008, Rostbøll 2009 & Mavelli, 2012). Traditional security frameworks placed significant importance on assuring security militarily and ideologically (Buzan *et al.*, 1998). However, when considering security agendas solely from a military and ideological point of view, the underpinnings of nation's security agenda becomes understood only partially, and many of the democratic social processes that inform such a security agenda are overlooked (Buzan *et al.*, 1998). An understanding of *how* and *why* particular narratives are securitised while others are not requires that both represented and unrepresented narratives in the political cartoon discourse is understood. Through highlighting how particular narratives are pushed forward in democracies by the social processes that underpin them, this analysis seeks to illustrate how fundamental rights are removed from particular communities through the visual securitisation process. Ideally, multiple cases should be investigated to explore how visual securitisation processes influence the democratic rights of particular population groups. Due to the space constraints affiliated with this discussion Denmark and the publication of political cartoons in 2005 will be at the centre of this conceptual investigation on how political cartoons inform the securitisation process. The 2005 Danish cartoon case published in *Jyllands-Posten* was chosen due to the widely accessible resources available on the subject, the praise that Denmark often receives on its democratic governance, and the wide-ranging implications that the cartoon crises had domestically and internationally.

In order to elaborate on how these groups are being securitised at the intersections of institutionalised democratic state apparatuses, this paper will unfold in three parts. Firstly, the paper will expand on the theoretical underpinnings of securitisation and explain why the process of securitisation against targeted groups within a democratic government undermines democratic governance. Secondly, it will engage with an intertextual and inter-visual analysis of political cartoons published in Denmark in order to empirically support how such securitisation is deconstructive to democratic governance. Lastly, the paper

will extend on the notion of establishing a regime of rights that encompasses both citizen rights and human rights under one regime, rather than one national constitutional regime of citizenship and one international regime of human rights, as a form of desecuritisation.

2. Literature Review

Setting out to understand how and why particular socially perceived threats become securitised, whilst others do not, demands an understanding of the different dominant discourses that intersect to allow for securitisation. Literature looking at the processes of securitization beyond the traditional framework has placed emphasis on the role of images in securitisation as they are designed from a particular ideological outlook and projected to a known audience (Williams 2003, McDonald 2008, Rostbøll 2009 & Mavelli, 2012). A seminal work by Hansen (2011b) presents an intervisual and intertextual model that can be used to analyse the social processes that underpin securitisation of a threat beyond the linguistic process. In her analysis she points out the importance of considering the visual itself, its immediate intertextual context and the wider social and political discourses it is framed by. Political cartoons, unlike photographs, or film and video carry with them a narrative that has been informed by a particular historical time and narrative that can be assimilated by the majority of a population (Williams, 2003: 17). Political cartoons therefore become reflective of the narratives that a society pushes forward, ignores, or makes obsolete. Although Hansen's approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the factors in visual representation that push a perceived threat into a securitised state, the approach does not interact with the narratives of representation that *are not* highlighted in the visuals. In order to comprehensively understand how particular threats are securitised while others are not, and the evolution of such securitisation, the narratives that are emphasised as well as made obsolete must be considered in the socially constructed process.

Marshall McLuhan's tetrad of media effects provides a framework for identifying what wider impact the political cartoon narratives have by respectively regarding represented and unrepresented narratives (Grosswiler, 1996: 4). The tetrad of media effects therefore assists this analysis by integrating represented, and unrepresented narratives into analysing the visual securitisation process of particular population groups.

Hussain Ali's (2007) discussion in 'The Media's Role in a Clash of Misconceptions: The Case of the Danish Muhammad Cartoons' cautions against analysing political cartoons and extracting narratives from them without considering the historical trajectory of ideology that informs the production, interpretation and reproduction of such images. Breaking down the historical representations of religious figures in Western and Eastern media, Hussain highlights how such representations are often flawed by being generated through ideological lenses that are ignorant to the ideologies they are visually portraying. These false representations result in ideological misconceptions being generated among media consumers. As

they are consumed such misconstrued ideological representations become socially articulated into truths, thereby limiting possibilities of cultural conflicts becoming resolved (Hussain, 2007: 120). Hussain's discussion reinforces the need for this analysis to analyse the influences that the chosen political cartoons have had on dominant discourses that cut across society and incorporates multiple voices of representation, such as public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups. Without incorporating the responses of multiple actors involved in the securitisation process, this analysis risks developing a critical and comprehensive discussion. Furthermore, to avoid limiting the analysis with false narratives that do not inform how visual securitisation can undermine democratic rights, this analysis will focus on the period from September 2005 until February 2006. This period was chosen because from the date of publication in September, 2005 it took five months for the visual representations to be pushed into a state of securitisation as responses toward the representations became increasingly violent.

The importance of needing to understand the narratives that are respectively pushed forward and made obsolete is highlighted in discussions of desecuritisation (Aradua, 2004: 389). In democratic environments where particular population groups are being marginalised and under-represented through securitisation, a need emerges for 'speech acts' that desecuritize instead. Extending on Kantian philosophy, Rostbøll (2009) presents the need for autonomy of identity to not be seen as a character ideal, but rather as a right to every member of a community to be respected. Extending on the Danish cartoon controversy, Rostbøll (2009: 630) notes that the question should not be whether freedom of expression should exist or not, but rather, the limitations to the *use* of such expression must be made clear within plural democracies. Extending beyond citizenry and social identity of communities within the nation-state, Isin (2013) asserts that instead of having a conversation about globalising human rights, there needs to be more focus on discussing the emergence of a regime of rights. In discussing a regime of rights, the contestations that divide citizenship rights and human rights are removed. This concept of a regime of rights presents an interesting frame of analysis from which to extend recommendations in response to securitised minorities within plural democratic societies.

3. Methods, Methodology and Limitations

There are two main conceptual frameworks that guide investigations of the securitisation process. One conceptual framework regards the securitisation process as one of exclusion, while the other regards it as a process of routines. The process of exclusion places emphasis on high-points in social and political interactions that push into existence (Bourbeau, 2014: 11). In contrast, securitisation as a process of routines emphasises securitisation as a process of mundane bureaucratic and structural processes that gradually place a target in a securitised state (Bourbeau, 2014: 11). Although they differ, both these conceptual frameworks highlight how securitisation involves for a threat to be socially constructed and pushed into a space that allows for exceptional measures of response to be directed toward the threat (Williams, 2003: 514). This analysis does not advocate for or against either of these conceptual

frameworks. Instead, it seeks to focus on unpacking the different dominant discourses that are embedded within political cartoons and to identify how these discourses informed the securitisation of particular population groups within a democracy.

Political cartoons were chosen as anchors to investigating the discourses that challenge democracies when regarding the process of securitisation for their multi-layered representations. Political cartoons exist as critical narratives that not only document the reality of a historical time, but also reflect sociocultural and political perceptions that inform the represented reality (Sandbrook, 2010: 26). In being representatives of particular internalised perceptions within a society, political cartoons offer insight into what discourses were within the mainstream, and which were marginalised. Understanding which discourses are mainstream, and which are marginalised is essential when unpacking the securitisation of particular population groups in a democracy because the discourses embedded in the cartoons assist in identifying what the agent, the referent object, the target and the audience of the securitisation process is within the phase of securitisation being analysed.

In order to unpack how political cartoons influence securitisation moves that undermine the democratic rights of particular population groups within democratic societies, this analysis addresses the following questions:

- i) What securitisation move is pushed forward by the political cartoon, and by what securitisation actor?
- ii) How is this securitisation move pushed forward by the relative political, social and economic discourses in the democracy at the time?
- iii) Does this securitisation move undermine the democratic rights of particular population groups in the democracy?

A qualitative design is best-suited for studying how and why particular groups are socially constructed as target groups for securitisation. The focus that qualitative research places on interpreting and understanding human action is in line with the aims and objectives of this analysis (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003: 322).

Corresponding with the qualitative design, an interpretivist analysis is used to identify what political cartoons are deserving of analysis in relation to securitisation. The process of securitisation requires that a targeted group of people, place or idea is seen as an existential threat to the security of the nation-state (Williams, 2003: 510). The political cartoon chosen for this analysis was therefore chosen on the basis of whether or not its representations push forward notions of an existential threat through narratives that demonize the other.

According to securitisation theory, the narratives of representation embedded in texts emerge, are distributed and interpreted differently as security threats throughout different historical times (Greenberg, 2002: 182). This presents a limitation to this analysis. In order to minimise this limitation, this analysis will focus on the historical time at which the political cartoon was used to push forward a securitisation move that justified extraordinary measures to be taken against an isolated security threat.

The narratives that are interpreted and analysed are retrieved from documentary evidence, and is therefore limited by the double hermeneutic and by the trustworthiness of the sources (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 19). The double hermeneutic emphasizes that interpreted information is inherently affected by subjectivities of the interpreter. This analysis attempts to minimise the limitation of the double hermeneutic by using triangulation of intervisual and intertextual sources that inform the representations pushed forward by the political cartoons.

In respect to evaluating what narratives emerge from the political cartoon into a space of securitisation in a democracy, Marshall McLuhan's tetrad approach is adopted. The questions posed under this framework are:

- i) **ENHANCES:** What does the political cartoon enhance?
- ii) **OBSOLESCE:** What is positioned as less urgent in the political cartoon to be securitised?
- iii) **RETRIEVES:** What does the political cartoon retrieve as an urgent target for securitisation?
- iv) **REVERSES:** What does the political cartoon turn into when pushed to extremes?

An individuated examination of the relative contributions of public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups (hereafter referred to as dominant discourses) on the securitisation pushed forward by the political cartoons is also done through the tetrad approach. An individuated examination of how these dominant discourses support or reject forms of visual securitisation represented by the political cartoon allows for a better understanding of how citizenship rights are made exclusionary vis-à-vis securitisation processes. This intertextual and intervisual analysis of the dominant discourses that underpin the political cartoon content is informed by the following questions:

- i) **ENHANCES:** What does the relative contributions of public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups enhance?
- ii) **OBSOLESCE:** What is positioned as less urgent in the relative contributions made by public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups?
- iii) **RETRIEVES:** What do the relative contributions of public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups retrieve as a target for securitisation?

- iv) **REVERSES:** What do the relative contributions of public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups turn into when pushed to extremes?

Accounting for the social processes that propel the identified securitisation narrative into action, a social constructivist approach is adopted. Social constructivism, by taking into consideration the influence of norms, culture, ideas and identity politics on the formulation of the securitised narrative, enables a breakdown of the contribution of public opinion, political rhetoric and elite interest groups to their emergence (Wendt, 1999: 34). For deliberating on public opinion online comments, public polls and protests in response to the political cartoons are drawn on. Political rhetoric will be underscored by official statements made by the government to the public and any discussion or passing of new policies by the government vis-à-vis the dominant discourses that emerged from the political cartoons. With regard to deliberating upon elite interest groups, the public or private partnerships with *Jyllands-Posten*, and the changes in such partnerships in relation to the political cartoons will be looked at.

4. Securitising Equalities into Inequalities

The securitisation of an object entails an ideology, group of people or nation-state being regarded as an existential threat. Such a threat can be premised on being a cultural threat or an existential security threat. At the crux of a cultural security threat are ideological contentions, whereas at the crux of existential security threats is the well-being of the nation-state and its citizenry (Rostbøll, 2009: 624). Quite often, however, the social processes that underpin securitisation create a nexus where cultural threats may escalate into existential threats, or in the aftermath of settling an existential threat, cultural contentions may emerge. Through unpacking how visual representations position particular population groups into an under-represented state within a democracy, the need to address visual securitisation as a democratic challenge is demonstrated.

4.1. Denmark: Visuals of Exclusion

The Danish society has been highlighted as an ill example for promoting tolerance and full inclusion of minority ethnic groups that are part of Denmark's population (ECRI, 2001, 2006). With 90% of its population being recorded as protestant Christians as of April 2015, and strict policies of immigrant integration, it is evident that structurally Denmark is not a functional secular or multicultural society (Anderson, 2015: 30). This strong sense of homogeneity has been established and maintained structurally within the Danish society politically and socially. Across the 1980's less immigrants in the form of guest workers were received and instead more asylum seekers and refugees entered Denmark (Holtug, 2013: 192). Such a strong cultural homogeneity has presented barriers to minority groups, despite Denmark being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the 1951 Refugee Convention.

The publishing of twelve cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* under the title "The Face of Muhammad" sparked international debates on principles of freedom of speech and respect for difference

in secular societies. Following failed diplomatic negotiations between the Danish government, Muslim community groups and a number of Arab nations, the narratives represented by the cartoons moved into a realm of securitisation. By February 2006 the controversy sparked by the cartoons reached a high level intensity and entered into a state of securitisation as Danish embassies were attacked by protestors in Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Indonesia. Given that this analysis looks at the narratives that push a part of a population group into a securitised state, the analysis of the Danish cartoon controversy will focus particularly on the dominant discourses that enabled for the political cartoons to be pushed into a space of securitisation between September 2005 and February 2006.

4.1.1. The Dominant Discourse in “The Face of Muhammad”

Printed on 30 September 2005, the political cartoons gave way to controversial discussions at the intersection of ‘freedom of expression,’ by rejecting self-imposed limits on expression on the one hand, and respect of difference within a democratic society on the other (Rostbøll, 2009: 626).

Analysing the intertextual and intervisual narrative representations of all twelve cartoons goes beyond the space constraints of this discussion. The narratives embedded in the particular cartoon of Muhammad wearing a bomb in his turban will be at the centre of investigation given that it has been the selected cartoon between the twelve to be republished several times, and became the most recognised and debated representation. This visual homogenization of the twelve cartoons under this particular cartoon positions it at the forefront of the securitisation discourse as it is socially isolated from the rest and used to justify different forms of public opinion.

As a religious figure, Muhammad is drawn in the political cartoon with wild eyes, a dishevelled beard and moustache, and a harsh, unapproachable facial expression. The black turban on Muhammad’s head wraps around a lit bomb that is inscribed with Arabic calligraphy. The calligraphy is the *shahadah* (testimony of faith) which translates to English as “there is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God.” The positioning of the *shahadah* as an inscription on a bomb carried by such a prominent figure in Islam represents not only Muhammad as violent, but also Islam as a religion. Accompanying the political cartoon is an editorial note by Flemming Rose which emphasises the principles of free speech and criticises self-censorship within democratic societies:

“The modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They demand a special position, insisting on special consideration of their own religious feelings. It is incompatible with contemporary democracy and freedom of speech, where you must be ready to put up with insults, mockery and ridicule. It is certainly not always attractive and nice to look at, and it does not mean that religious feelings should be made fun of at any price, but that is of minor importance in the present context... we are on our way to a slippery slope where no one can tell how the self-censorship will end.” (Rose cited in Weaver, 2010: 5).

In his editorial note Rose emphasises that ‘some Muslims’ reject the principles of the modern, secular society. It was later made clear, in an opinion article written by Rose (2006), that this stated reference was directed at the actions fundamental Muslims who had instilled a sense of fear in the Danish society that resulted in self-censorship among news commentators. The positioning of Muhammad and the testimony of faith within frame of fundamentalism, however, does not allow for a distinction to be made between different interpretations and practices of Islam. Instead, the visual securitisation of all Muslims as radical Islamists who must be feared as a threat is enhanced. Figure 4.1 highlights the narratives that underpin the publication.

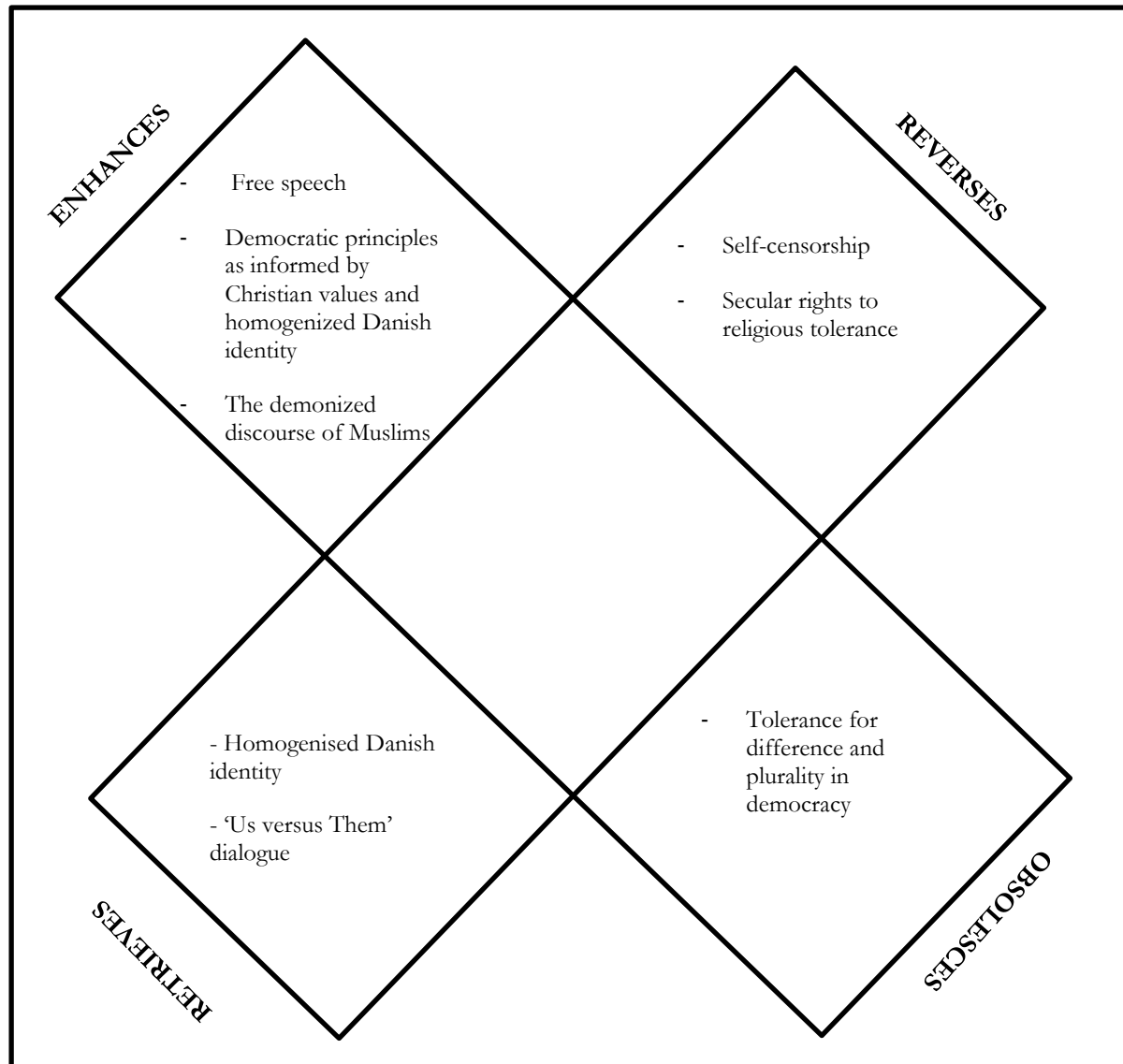


Figure 4.1 – The narratives that underpin the political cartoon

The political cartoon therefore places an already existing minority of Muslims into a visual securitisation process where they are feared as being extremists that will go commit extreme actions justified by interpretations of their faith. The call for immigrants to integrate into the Danish society by adopting a tolerance for religious satire in the editorial note reinforces the perception of Muslims fundamentalists as unable to critically engage with ideological differences within secular democracies. Combining the visual and textual representation, it is clear that a discourse of anti-Muslim integration is pushed forward by the publication. The rejection of Muslim immigrants from the democratic society engages with a historical narrative of homogenisation that had strengthened nationalism within the Danish polity starting in the 1980s (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011: 259). In doing so, the dominant discourse in the political cartoon reinforces an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ divide which developed into a main contestation within the realm of public opinion.

4.1.2. “The Face of Muhammad” and Public Opinion

The initial public opinion discourse pushed forward by the Muhammad cartoons is the call to abandon all forms of self-censorship in order to promote the Danish constitutional right to freedom of expression. The cultural editor and commissioner, Flemming Rose, published an editorial alongside the cartoons stating that Muslims living in a secular democracy must accept the “mockery, ridicule, and sarcasm” that accompanies satire because it is in the name of free speech. Rose’s stance was further defended by him in an interview when he stated that “it is an act of love and inclusion to satirize people” (Malek, 2007: para.3). This discourse was reinforced by a majority of Danes within the country. A poll on January 29, 2006 done for the national broadcasting company of Denmark, Danmarks Radio, revealed that 79% out of 579 Danes were in favour of the cartoons being published and did not find it necessary for the Prime Minister to apologise for any offense the cartoons may have caused (NYHEDER, 2006: p 3-6). 58% of the respondents felt that although the freedom to publish the cartoons should not be curtailed, they could understand the Muslim criticism (NYHEDER, 2006: P7).

In contrast to the freedom of expression discourse was the need to respect religious sensitivities within a secular society discourse. This discourse was pushed forward in public opinion by direct protests from the Muslim community within and without Denmark, as well as by commentary. As visual representations that target only a fundamental interpretation of Islam, yet are generalised as reflective of all Muslims, the cartoons were viewed as promoting Islamophobia and racism. The ‘othering’ of Muslims Danes from other Danes both visually and in text are seen to be done by positioning Muhammad as an inherently threatening persona. In a letter to the editor of *The Independent*, Hasan (2006) expanded on this view in positing that:

“To imply that his teachings legitimate terrorist activities is in itself a deliberate act of incitement to hatred.”

In another article it was argued that given that Muhammad's history does not suggest he was a terrorist, the visual representation becomes a proxy for all Muslims (Shamsad, 2006). Although the cartoons in themselves did not make direct claims of Islamophobia and cultural racism, the stereotyping that the visuals promote arguably pushes Muslims into a social position as being seen as a threat, and therefore subjected to cultural racism and Islamophobia. Beyond being seen as a form of hate speech, this discourse of the need to respect religious sensitivities became further supported by accusations across public opinion that the cartoons are blasphemous. In October 2005, several Muslim organisations in Denmark invoked a section of Danish criminal code against *Jyllands-Posten* claiming that the cartoons constituted blasphemy (Hansen, 2006: 9).

In defence of the publication, the editor in chief at the time, Catsten Juste, claimed that the publication was not intended to represent all Muslim's as fundamentalists who cannot be integrated into Denmark's democratic society, but rather represented 'some' Muslims who "feel entitled to interpret the prophet's word, [and] cannot abide the insult that comes from being the object of intelligent satire" (as cited in Hervik, 2012: 45).

While some public opinions against the publication were handled with demands to fair representation through legal and diplomatic channels, other responses took on more extreme dimensions such as violent protests and murder threats. A report by Robert Fisk (2006) reported:

"The Islamic Army in Iraq, one of the main insurgent groups, made a blood-curling call yesterday for violence against citizens of countries where caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad had been published. 'We swear to God, if we catch one of their citizens in Iraq, we will cut him to pieces, to take revenge for Prophet,' it said in an unverified internet statement [*sic*].

The Islamic Army in Iraq is not known to be an extremely fundamentalist one, however, it is a violent one, and such a response speaks to the more violent public opinion discourse that arose. Over the course of the crisis, 200 people died across the Muslim world from public protests that were sparked. Figure 4.2 highlights the dominant public opinion discourses that emerged between September 2005 and February 2006.

There are therefore four dominant discourses that emerge from public opinion between 30 September, 2005 and February 2006. These discourses are (1) Islamic fundamentalism (2) free speech (3) blasphemous visual representations and (4) false stereotyping of all Muslims as terrorists. As these public opinion discourses gained support and grew in contestation domestically and internationally, the need to respond politically became unavoidable.

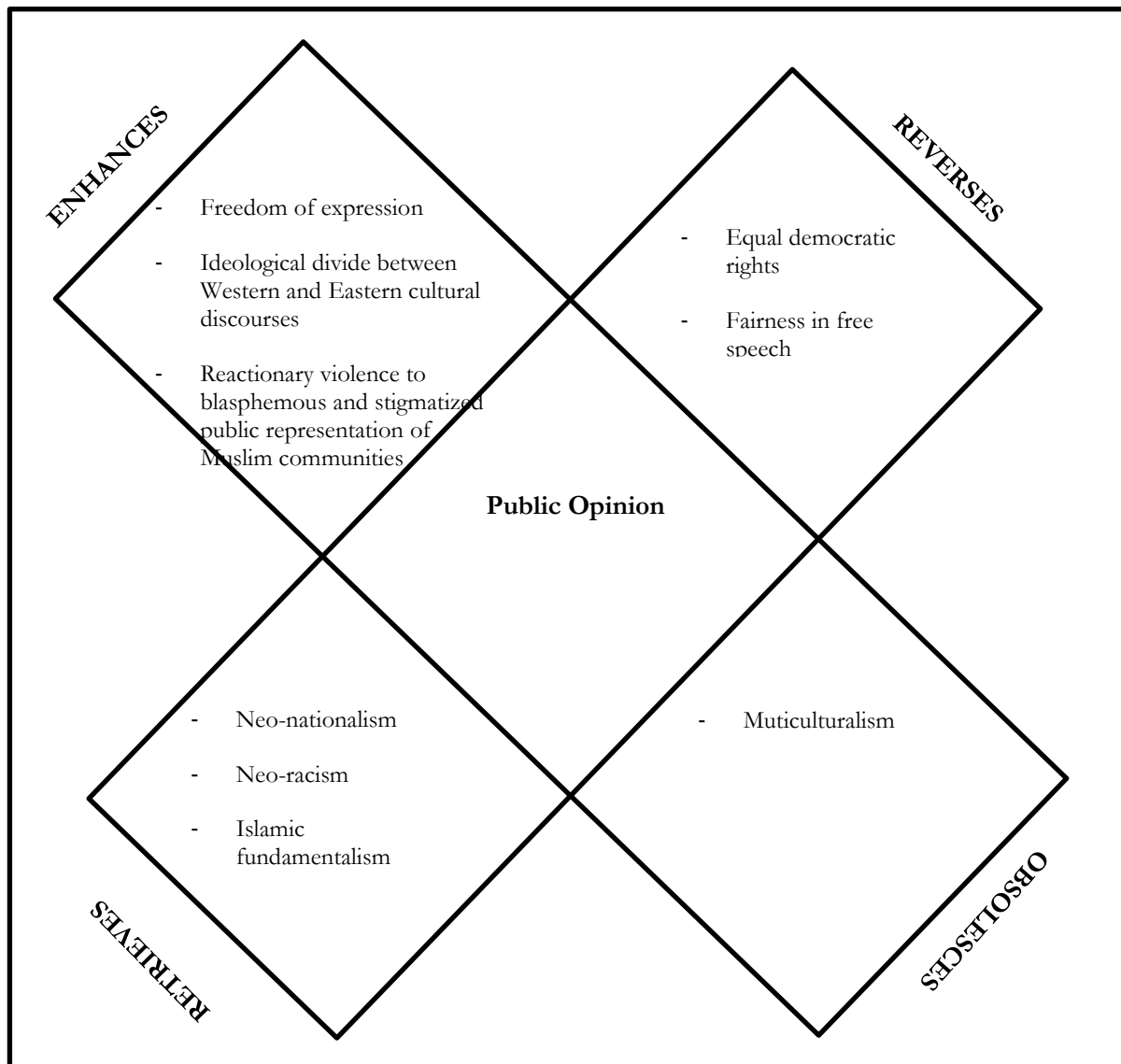


Figure 4.2 – The public opinion discourse on the political cartoon

4.1.3. “The Face of Muhammad” and Political Rhetoric

Domestically the political rhetoric within Denmark was dominated by the need to uphold the promotion of free speech. A diplomatic peak was reached between Denmark and the Muslim community by October 12, 2005 when a letter was sent to Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen requesting a meeting with him to discuss the implications of the political cartoons. The letter had been drafted by ambassadors to Arab nations based in Denmark and criticised what they viewed as a rise in Islamophobia in Denmark (Weaver, 2010: 678). On October 21, 2005, Rasmussen rejected the request stating that to interfere with the publication would be to interfere with freedom of speech and free press, which he argued is against the Danish constitution. Defending his position, Rasmussen made a press statement stating “this is a matter of principle. I won’t meet with them because it is so crystal clear what principles Danish democracy is built upon that there is no reason to do so” (cited in Rostbøll, 2009: 626). Rasmussen’s political stance

reciprocated the one of the editorial published alongside the cartoons in that the western world is positioned to be more enlightened compared to the “dark middle ages” worldview that Muslims have.

This strong standing in enlightened liberalism in Denmark’s initial diplomatic response resulted in Egypt taking the lead in mobilizing a coalition of Arab countries and Muslim community leaders to demand a clear response from Denmark’s government on the matter. The ineffective diplomatic engagements between the coalition of Arab leaders and the Danish government led to an escalation in political tensions and by January 2006 these tensions begun exerting economic and security repercussions. Across the Arab world, nations demanding that action be taken against the political cartoons began boycotting Danish products (Lindholm & Olsson, 2010: 262). On February 4, the joint Danish, Swedish and Norwegian embassy in Syria was attacked. The Danish embassy in Lebanon was burned down the day after, and more than 20,000 people took to the streets to demonstrate against the cartoons. The burning down of the Danish embassy in Lebanon allowed for Denmark to call on European Union (EU) support under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. EU representatives attempted to appease the tensions, however, diplomatic legitimacy had already been lost, and Arab nations demanded a formal apology. *Jyllands-Posten* apologised “for any offence caused” on a live interview on Al Jazeera on 31 January 2006 (Lindholm & Olsson, 2010: 262). The apology did little to appease what had by now turned from a domestic crisis to a global crisis, as Western perspectives of free speech were positioned against accusations of Islamophobia with Western nations republishing the original cartoons, and various Islamic countries retaliated.

Domestically the crisis allowed for the Danish People’s Party (DPP) to gain political standing in opposition to the leading Venstre party under Rasmussen at the time. The right-wing DPP has historically held a strong anti-immigrant rhetoric and advocates homogenous Danish culture and traditions (Holtug, 2013: 193). As the domestic crisis escalated, rhetoric that echoes Muslims as a threat became increasingly used. The low number of Muslim representatives in the legislature does not allow for the dominant domestic discourse that defends the cartoons and stigmas on Muslims to be challenged. Out of 179 members that form the national parliament, only three between 2005 and 2006 were representatives of Muslim background (Euro-Islam.info, 2016).

Increased control and surveillance of Muslim immigrant families in Denmark thus became justified under the banner of pre-empting religiously motivated attacks against citizens (Rytter & Pederson, 2014: 2305). The discourse of securitisation that accompanied the War on Terror provided justification to an already anti-immigrant political climate to tighten the criteria for immigrants entering or seeking permanent residence in Denmark (Rytter & Pedersen, 2014: 2305). The stringent criteria that immigrants must meet to be considered for permanent residency speak to the intolerance and exclusion of minority ethnic groups from Denmark’s democratic society (Holtug, 2013). These steps to citizenship became

increasingly stringent following 9/11 with measures being tightened in Denmark in 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2007 under integration contracts. Such contracts are structural procedures that immediately exclude immigrants from the Danish social fabric and immediately establish a two-tier society where some are institutionally made into the 'other.' The argument can therefore be posited that the cartoons promoted right wing populism in Denmark in a way that has significantly impacted the effective integration of Muslim immigrants into Danish society. Figure 4.3 highlights the dominant political rhetoric discourses between September 2005 and February 2006.

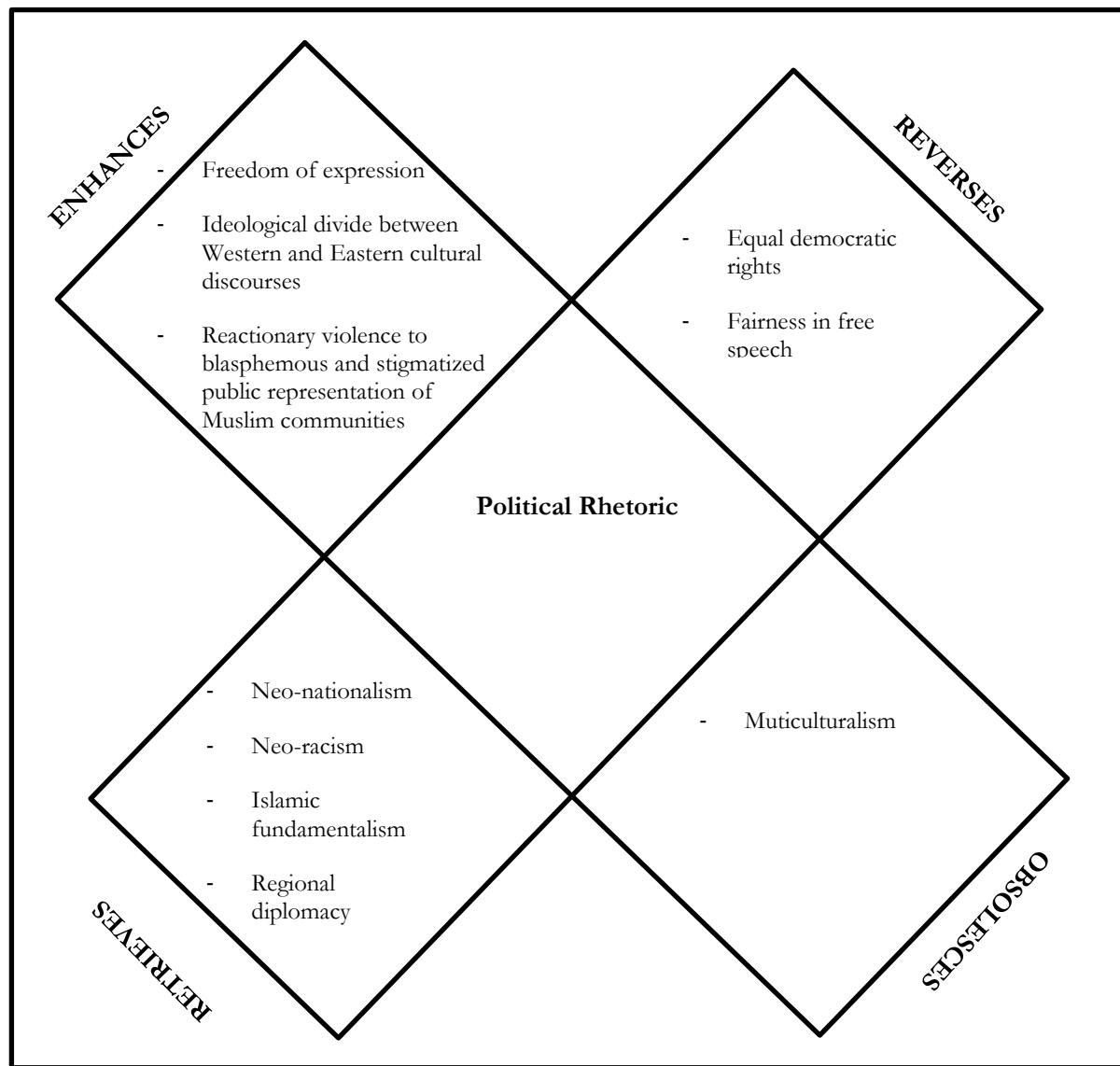


Figure 4.3 – The political rhetoric on the political cartoon

The political rhetoric that underpinned the political cartoons remained in favour of the publication in defence of the freedoms that are part of Denmark's liberal democracy. The strong anti-immigration rhetoric that had become a constant since the early 2000's provided an existing discursive field of framing that political parties had relied on to gain support through for a number of years preceding the 2005 cartoons. Failure to respond in a way that acknowledged the democratic rights of Danish Muslims to not be stigmatized into national security threats, enabled the dominant discourses that underpin the political cartoons to push forward a more rigorous panoptic gaze on Muslim immigrants.

4.1.4. "The Face of Muhammad" and Elite Interest Groups

Although the independently owned *Jyllands-Posten* claims to be non-partisan, the late 1990's saw a gradual shift in the positioning of news stories between the main newspapers as the market became flooded by free distributors. By 2006, these free distributors were gaining up to 60% readership from the bite-size media they were distributing to the public (Hall, 2016: 237). The entrance of competition into the market saw the main newspaper distributors such as *Berlingske Tidende*, *Ekstra Bladet* and *Jyllands-Posten* taking more clear stances on trending issues and thereby they began to echo particular political positions (Hervik, 2012: 21).

In reserving the opinion section of the paper for stronger expressions on politically controversial topic, the newspapers retained the ability to claim non-partisanship, despite actively allowing for particular positions to be pushed forward, and others to be made obsolete. For instance, in a study by Berg and Hervik (cited in Hall, 2016: 238), a frames analysis of articles between January 15, 2006 and March 15, 2006, showed that 232 articles contained the terms "Muhammad" and "freedom of speech." Analysing only opinion pieces, columns and editorials, the study revealed that the most dominant frames were 'freedom of speech as a Western universal human right threatened by Islam. The prevalence of such a frame within the short time period highlights how the media houses, despite their claims to being non-partisan, promoted more right-wing conservative political actions. Figure 4.4 highlights the dominant elite interest discourse that underpinned the political cartoons during the period under analysis.

Although the media houses in Denmark claim to have detached themselves from the political parties, it is clear that with market competition, and the need to gain readership, their ties to political parties and promotion of valued ideologies is dependent on the readership they are able to maintain.

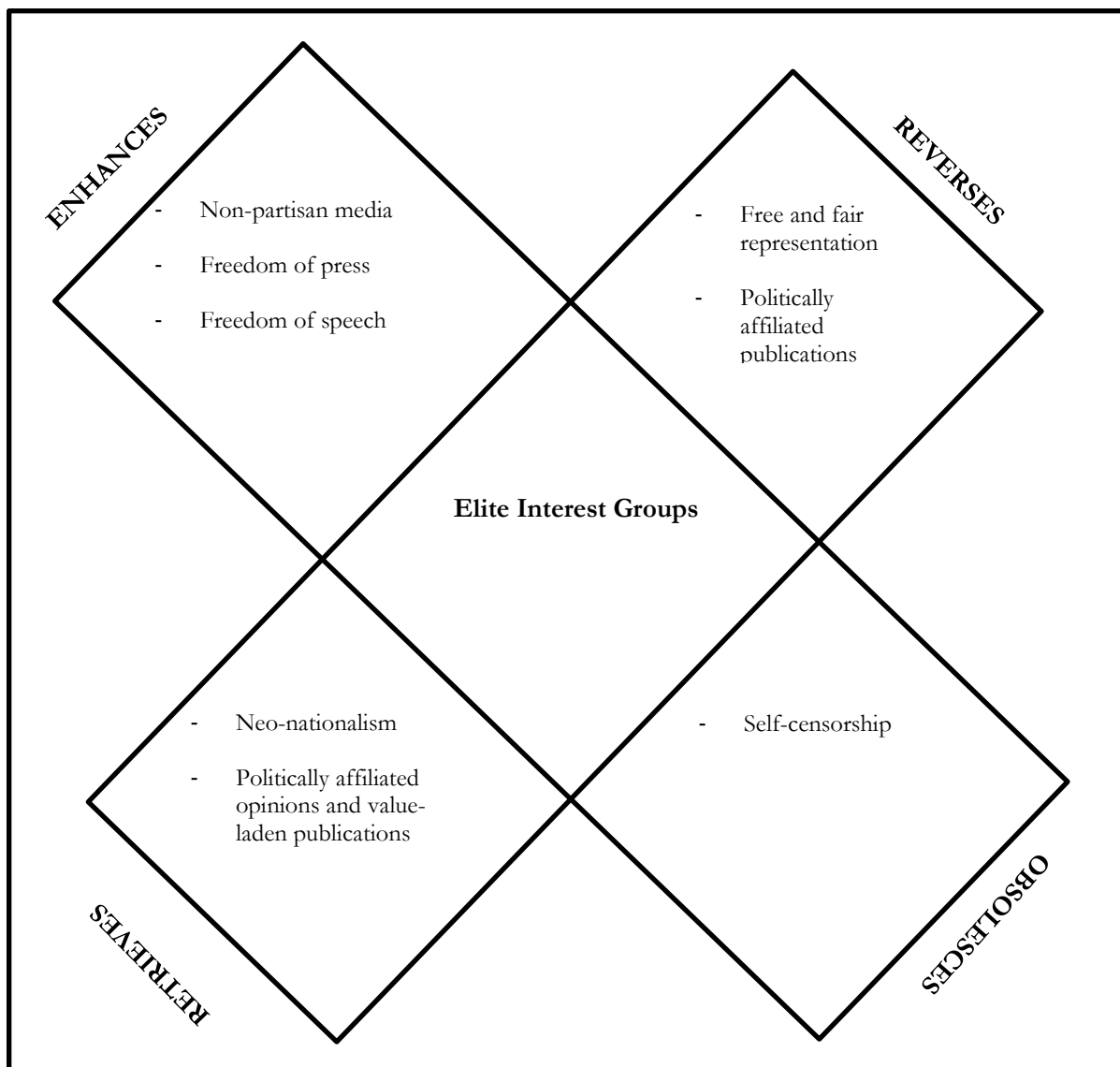


Figure 4.4 – The elite interest groups on the political cartoon

4.1.5. The Impact of the Visual Securitisation Process on Democratic Rights

As a liberal democracy Denmark has positioned religion as a pillar of society that is a fair target for criticism and satire. The analysis of the dominant discourses that underpinned the political cartoons demonstrates that the freedoms that come with liberal democracy were used by defenders of the cartoons. What emerges as problematic in supporting these visual representations with democratic rights, however, is that the political cartoons that were published did not simply criticise or satirise Islam as a religion, but positioned all Muslims as terrorists and unenlightened. Given the global War on Terror rhetoric, and the pre-established anti-immigrant policies in Denmark, these political cartoons assisted in pushing forward a process of securitisation where the entire Muslim population was framed as radical terrorists and a threat to the Danish way of life.

Furthermore, the refusal by *Jyllands-Posten* to publish cartoons of Jesus sent to them by Danish illustrator Christoffer Zieler in April 2003 in fear that the cartoons would cause a public outcry further illustrates a selective representation of particular population groups over others (Fouché, 2006: P3,4). Such selective representation raises the question of what democratic representations through expressions such as cartoons are enhanced and made obsolete. In helping position the Danish Muslim population in a position where the dominant discourses that emerge from the cartoons prioritise them as threatening to the rest of Danish society, the political cartoons arguably help in supporting narratives of securitisation that undermine Muslim representation in the Danish society.

Such inconsistency in representation is further enhanced by the refusal by the Danish judiciary to consider the relevance of the visual representations of the Muhammad cartoons as blasphemous under the anti-discrimination law, Criminal Code Article 266b (Bleich, 2012: 123). After being approached by a coalition of Muslim organisations that filed complaints against the cartoons, the public authorities claimed that no offence or blasphemous readings could be found in 'The Face of Muhammad' cartoons (Hall, 2016: 240).

The juxtaposition between the Danish pro-cartoon discourse, and the "Other" anti-cartoon discourses pushed forward by the relevant dominant discourses highlights the under-representation that is structurally endorsed against particular population groups.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, democratic rights were positioned as human rights in article 21(3). Through deconstructing the intervisual and intertextual narratives of the 2005 political cartoons in Denmark, it is highlighted that the dominant discourses that form the democratic governance of Denmark, do not allow for democratic rights to be equally accessed and used by all of its population. Instead, the quintessential elements on which democratic governance rests are being suppressed by the narratives of a physical fear, a cultural fear and an 'Otherness' that places them into a space where shared freedoms for all, are becoming securitised freedoms for only some.

Being socially constructed and re-constructed within a discursive field, identity provides structure, yet remains transient in what informs the discursive field from which it emerges (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105-114). The dominant anti-Muslim political rhetoric that preceded the cartoons, yet became reinforced by their visual representations, the high level of support this rhetoric received from public opinion, and elite interest groups illustrates how the cartoons empowered the securitisation of Muslim populations groups.

The aim of this has been to identify what role political cartoons can have on the securitisation process. The respective tetrads that identify *how* political cartoons affect the securitisation of particular minority groups showcases how democratic governance becomes undermined by democratic rights that are

selectively enforced. In having elaborated on how particular population groups can be further securitised by the discourses pushed forward by visual representations, this analysis advocates Isin's (2013) 'regime of rights' as a conceptual step to minimising democratic challenges that comes with securitising population groups as threats without direct impetus. Isin (2013: 67) advocates for a merging of citizen rights with human rights by approaching rights as an emerging regime, rather than as two incompatible regimes between human rights and citizen rights. In order to accomplish this, Isin (2013: 67-69) calls for nation-states and the international arena to engage in the:

- i) recoding of sovereignty
- ii) depoliticizing of rights
- iii) repoliticizing of rights

In undergoing these three processes, Isin (2013) advocates that emerging political subjects of rights are established within nation-state boundaries, but the practices that govern their human rights are given complete precedence over the citizenship rights they are or are not granted. Such a convergence between citizen rights and human rights will, according to Isin (2013) allow for less shortcomings in democratic governance within nation-states.

The initial aim of this analysis was to regard the role of political cartoons in the securitisation of particular population groups and the effect of such securitisation on their democratic rights across Denmark, France and the US. Unfortunately, due to the space constraints attached to this analysis, Denmark was chosen as the focus due to the widely accessible resources available on the subject, the praise that Denmark often receives on its democratic governance, and the wide-ranging implications that the cartoon crises had domestically and internationally. This analysis and its main contention on how political cartoons influence securitisation of population groups in democracies, and thereby undermine their democratic rights, is deeply limited by the singular focus on Denmark. The same conceptual approach used in this analysis should be applied to other contexts in future studies in order to gage the legitimacy of this analytical approach.

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