

## Chapter 9

# When Caricature Meets Resistance

Eva Beate Strømsted

Self-censorship? Yes. There wasn't much of it before, but today it [the satire] is drenched in self-censorship. I feel it affects almost everything I draw now. Earlier I just made a drawing with my opinion, and it got published. But now I think: 'Okay, if I make it this way, it will not get published.' Eventually I make a drawing that will be accepted (Cartoonist 3).

According to Freedberg (1991), humans have always worshiped and feared images, giving pictures powerful and magical influence, ruining and censoring them. With regards to the art of cartoons, its aesthetics have been seen as a strong political weapon. It is especially within the last decade's dramatic developments that the thoughts of the Norwegian cartoonist in the above quote must be located.

In Paris 7 January 2015, two Islamists, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, connected to Al-Qaida's branch in Yemen, forced their way into the office of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Armed with assault rifles and other weapons, they killed 12 people and injured 11 others, all because of Charlie Hebdo's drawings of Muhammad (Samuelsen 2015).

However, the magazine has always published cartoons insulting whomever, often in a completely disrespectful manner, and the assassinations at Charlie Hebdo must be seen as an extension of the cartoon controversy that started ten years earlier.

In 2005, Flemming Rose, the culture editor of the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, wanted to contribute to the debate about criticism of Islam and self-censorship among European artists. Hence, on 30 September 2005, 12 cartoons of the Prophet were published under the title 'Muhammad's face' and the drawings were later republished as facsimiles in several Norwegian and international publications. Muslim groups in Denmark complained and the issue eventually led, the following year, to emergency meetings, trade boycotts, violent demonstrations, death threats, terror, the burning of flags and destruction of embassies all over the world in 2006 (CNN 2006). Furthermore, the publication incited a murder attempt against the Danish artist Kurt Westergaard.

---

Strømsted, Eva Beate (2017). When Caricature Meets Resistance p. 121-135 in Elsebeth Frey, Mofizur Rhaman and Hamida El Bour (eds.) *Negotiating Journalism. Core Values and Cultural Diversities*. Göteborg: Nordicom.

A Somali man, with ties to Al-Qaida, tried to murder the then 75-year-old cartoonist with an axe and a knife (Batty 2010).

By looking into the working situation of seven editorial cartoonists in Norway, this study will establish a greater understanding of how the last decade's uproar has affected cartoonists' freedom of speech. Has the editorial cartoonists' freedom of expression been curtailed? Do cartoonists indulge in self-censorship? To what extent do they consider ethical dilemmas in their images? Have their choices with regard to visual expression changed?

## The history of the caricature – the conflict is spreading

If we look back in time, we can see that satire has never been gentle. The task has always been to ridicule and taunt. Christians in Norway have been particularly tested by many controversial blasphemous drawings against their clergy, which have made people furious.

During the interwar-period – when we had totalitarian movements in Europe such as Nazism, Fascism and Communism – satire transformed into a strong and provocative propaganda tool and a watchdog in the society. Kjus and Kaare (2006:20) suggest that cartoons may turn into propaganda because they outline the cultural identity and attitudes that exist in a society in a humorous way, sometimes too aggressively. A good example is the well-known Norwegian cartoonist, Ragnvald Blix, and his anti-Nazi drawings during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When the Germans occupied Norway in 1940, he fled to Sweden so that his sharp critique could survive. Over the border he continued to draw under the pseudonym Stig Höök. However, the Nazis also used the power of the image to foster contempt against the Jews (Hansen 1986:xiii). In anti-Semitic propaganda, for instance, Jews have been likened to the Devil (Vogt 1978:16).

Due to a globalized world, Western cartoonists are now challenging the multicultural society and another religion – Islam. However, Islam and Judaism have a strong tradition of aniconism, as it is prohibited in most Islamic traditions to visually depict Muhammad. In the Exodus one can read:

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them (Moses 20:3-5).

In Islam the belief is most strongly held by the Sunnis, who form the great majority of the world's Muslims, whereas the image ban is debatable among the Shias (Steien 2007:11). Nevertheless, what made the editorial act in 2005 so provocative is the fact that the 12 cartoons were used as propaganda by a group of Danish imams. The imams travelled around the Middle East showing the cartoons and, in addition to this, presented non-published controversial pictures, among them a photograph from a French pig festival (ibid:3).

Since 2005 satire has been confronted even more forcefully. Known to poke fun at all kinds of authorities, Charlie Hebdo has received several threats. In 2013, for instance, the magazine published a special edition with 64 pages dedicated to Muhammad's life, provoking very strong reactions. In 2015 the reactions reached their peak resulting in 12 deaths. One month later gunmen tried to hit the Swedish artist, Lars Vilks, with an estimated 200 gunshots for caricaturing prophet Muhammad. The terror attack happened during a blasphemy debate at a café in Copenhagen (Johnston 2015). The freedom of expression was again attacked in May of the same year, this time in Texas in the USA. Also here, shots were fired during an event featuring controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. The shooting suspect, identified as Elton Simpson, linked himself to ISIS just before the attack (Shoichet 2015).

### Art and a journalistic genre

Annibale Carracci established the term 'caricatura' during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Italian painter was particularly known for his humorous and exaggerated caricatures that contrasted with contemporary idealism. To caricature therefore means to exaggerate what is characteristic (Lien 2015:9ff).

Seen as art, the expression also encompasses another field, journalism (Becker 2008:123), and according to Frey and Gjerstad (2006), it is a visual comment. Text has a criticizing power, but Borgersen and Ellingsen emphasize that it is easier to remember an image (2004:138). Drawers have also a greater editorial freedom and have been considered the press' freest pen. An explanation to this may be that the visual language has multiple interpretations (Frey & Gjerstad 2006).

Yet, both cartoonists and journalists need to follow several constraints that set out limitations and develop genres – the Code of Ethics of the Norwegian Press, the Penal Code, as well as the declaration of the rights and duties of the editor. Journalists' bosses – the editors – have a particular role in guarding press freedom within the framework of this declaration. The declaration, which establishes and defends editorial independence from interference by the owners, is jointly signed by the Association of Norwegian Editors, Norsk Redaktørforening (NR) and the owners, Mediebedriftene.

There is little research around the visual aspect of satire. The caricature has mainly been considered an important piece of source material for journalists and historians. One of the reasons is probably because caricature has been viewed as innocent fun (Lien 2015:30ff). However, the last decade's bloody outcomes contradict this view, and have resulted in an increased interest in the art form itself.

Ingebretsen (2008) studied caricature's visual communication through cognitive metaphor theory, by examining satires. Comparing the visual communication with the written language, she used the pictorial and plastic layers to describe the meaning of metaphors. The first layer emphasizes what items the recipient sees on the surface of the image. The second layer, the plastic, examines the underlying meaning through

shapes, colours and textures (ibid:65). Here, the distinction between pictorial and plastic layers will be applied in an analysis of two cartoons made by one of the interviewees.

Fabricius and Roksvold (2010:86) clarify that a metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit connection between two things that are unrelated but share common characteristics. Cognitive metaphor theory has gradually been applied to a variety of fields – poetry, linguistics and music, as well as sign language for the deaf.

## Regulations

Norway has several constraints that render the concept of free opinion and press freedom less than absolute. The Norwegian Penal Code (2015) justifies a limitation with regard to several actions that may be considered offensive or infringing.

Firstly, the Penal Code prohibits the insulting of another state's flag, coat of arms, or representation in Norway (1995 § 95). Secondly, it is forbidden to make hateful and discriminatory statements, especially about other peoples' religion, skin colour and sex. This also includes the use of symbols (2013 § 135a). The so-called racism article, § 135a, is especially controversial since it involves a restriction on freedom of expression. Moreover, it is prohibited to defame (1939 § 246), harm others' reputation or name (1980 § 247), violate their privacy or public announcements (1973 § 390) or behave in an offensive or frightening manner (2003 § 390a).

Internationally, legislation against blasphemy has continued to restrict freedom of expression and press freedom over the past six years. As of 2011, 47 per cent of countries issued such laws (UNESCO 2014:31). However, the assassination at Charlie Hebdo prompted Norwegian politicians to act immediately. Consequently, with the aim to strengthen freedom of expression as soon as possible the supreme legislature of Norway, Stortinget, annulled the blasphemy article on 5 May 2015 (Verdens Gang 2015).

## Methodology

The following is based on research conducted in Norway. Seven cartoonists representing national, local, and regional newspapers in Norway were asked the same pre-defined questions during face-to-face qualitative interviews. This method makes it possible to compare and generalize (Østbye et al. 2013:105). The interviews covered the editorial cartoonists' freedom of expression, press freedom, visual changes within their body of work, self-censorship, fear of violence and terror, satire's thematic development, taboos, stereotypes and the profession's prospects.

Moreover, it was important to interview Kjersti Løken Stavrum, at the time Secretary General of the Norwegian Press Association, Norsk Presseforbund (NP). The organisation is responsible for monitoring the ethical work of the Norwegian press. While Stavrum is presented in the research by name, the cartoonists' answers are

anonymous due to security reasons. The interviews will be presented in a thematic order and the interviewees are numbered 1 to 7 (the Norwegian cartoonists have been given number 1 to 5, and the international cartoonists have been numbered 6 to 7). The two international cartoonists, originally from societies ruled by dictatorships, were also asked: How free were you as an editorial cartoonist in your homeland comparing to Norway? Have you received any reactions or threats in Norway? By examining the themes above, this research looks deeper into the nature of freedom of expression in Norway and its development since 2005.

In order to examine the visual development, two drawings made by the same cartoonist will be compared: one before (2005) and one after (2009) the cartoon controversy. The aim will be to look at the narratives and metaphors, visual choices in terms of visual rhetoric, colours, symbols and patterns. Trends and changes will be studied through a comparative discourse and a qualitative content analysis – methods that allow the underlying meanings to be identified (Østbye et al.:211).

Nonetheless, the case study has some disadvantages. As only two drawings are examined, the result may not be scientifically durable. Additionally, it is difficult to make an entirely objective comparison and the answer may also be accidental or contingent on different factors.

### What do the Norwegian cartoonists think?

All of the Norwegian cartoonists say that the cartoon controversy in 2005/2006 has made the profession more difficult. One of them says: ‘It is an indisputable fact that freedom of expression has been restricted since 2006. Caricature has become more controversial and difficult’ (Cartoonist 4). Interviewee 3 feels scared that his freedom of expression has been violated: ‘Ten years ago I was 99 per cent free and I could draw whatever I wanted. Today I do not feel free anymore and I think that it is scary and totally freaking’ (Cartoonist 3). The five editorial cartoonists point out that the human right to free expression does not exist in reality – just on paper. Four interviewees outline political correctness as the primary reason for the restriction. One cartoonist thinks that the reason is ‘fear of violence’ (Cartoonist 4).

Whereas four out of five do not feel threatened by extremists, one says he has to be careful when he walks alone in the city: ‘Today I have to be cautious where I go. One should not be afraid, but it is going to become worse in a few years. It is the damn political correctness that curtails freedom of expression’ (Cartoonist 3). These findings can be parallelized to another profession, namely journalists. In 2012, 20 per cent of the Norwegian journalists claimed they had been exposed to threats over the previous five years, and two per cent had experienced physical violence (Idås 2013:39f). In 2015, a report by the Work Research Institute (AFI) showed that incidents of hate speech and threats have increased. More precisely, it reports that one out of five people working in the Norwegian media feels suppressed today (Gjestad 2015).

One of the main questions in the semi-structured interviews was: 'Have you ever self-censored yourself?' Four out of five give affirmative answers – they have. Interviewee 2 explains that freedom of expression has mostly been restricted due to self-censorship, as the legislation has substantially been equal and untouched, sometimes even strengthened: 'Personally, I apply self-censorship every day within every theme, because I may be tempted to exceed the boundaries' (Cartoonist 2).

One of the interviewees mentions that editors have become more politically correct: 'A drawing that may be offensive may not be published in the newspaper. But a drawing that is politically correct – it may be published. It is scary that people has the power to tell us how to think' (Cartoonist 3). This development, says another, has made him draw more intellectual puzzles, allowing him to get away with the message without provoking the editors (Cartoonist 5). However, several editorial cartoonists say that their editors give them freedom to decide the visual appearance of the caricature. The themes, on the other hand, are directed by editorial choices and the commentators' texts. Yet, in some newspapers, a caricature may be published without a text as an independent visual comment. As the work of an artist, the cartoon may then be seen as emblematic of cartoonists' individual freedom and responsibility to challenge social conventions (Becker 2008:123).

Norwegian cartoonists traditionally visualized people and situations in their own country with political actors mainly in the centre (Berntsen 1999:73). Today, several interviewees say that satire has a major focus towards *religion*. 'At the start of my career it was not a very interesting topic, but it did not take long before it gained more importance' (Cartoonist 1). The same drawer adds that before globalization, editorial drawings focused more on internal politics, the USA and the Soviet Union. Interviewee 2 agrees about this change: 'The focus *has* increased, and I do therefore draw more religious drawings today than ever before' (Cartoonist 2). Another adds that it is relevant in light of the frequent provocation of religion: 'Because we are constantly being confronted with it – Muslims have their own culture and they do not want to integrate with the Norwegian society' (Cartoonist 4).

Four out of the five Norwegian cartoonists state that they have no problem sketching Islam-related drawings, but all of them agree that this topic requires extreme precision. One says: 'You must know how these drawings will be perceived. It is almost impossible to imagine that an image can have so much power', and then adds:

Today I spend less time on the actual execution of the drawing and more time on updating myself. I do not have time to read novels anymore, but choose to rather read the history of religion and the history of culture. The level of difficulty has increased (Cartoonist 2.).

Then what about stereotypes? Previously, journalists and editorial cartoonists used stereotypes to produce cultural viewpoints. As stated by Steien, these were characterized by the old colonial heritage due to geographical distances (2007:21f). All five interviewees state that what worked before, does not work today. The same goes for taboos.

The Norwegian cartoonists mention that there are still taboos about drawings that challenge political correctness, ethnicity, cultural background, women and vulnerable groups. It is constantly mentioned that the Norwegian cartoonists are careful about the way they draw Jewish caricatures and Holocaust-elements. They are concerned about addressing these topics as the persecution of Jews as a social and religious group has a century-long history.

Also, a drawing of Muhammad is a huge taboo today. Nevertheless, for the Norwegian cartoonists it has never been an ambition to draw the Prophet. They do not want to offend, insult or hurt someone intentionally: 'I have no desire to vilify other people's religious feelings and I have never done it' (Cartoonist 2).

The risk and fear of being misunderstood is higher than ever before, and four out of the five state that they often think about the details that can be misinterpreted in a drawing. In all of the five Norwegian interviewees' opinion, today's multicultural society makes their work situation more challenging. One recalls when Theo van Gogh<sup>1</sup> was murdered: 'During that moment, I understood that I "talk" to people who may not agree with me and my worldview' (Cartoonist 1). After the murder in 2004, interviewee 1 started to draw common experiences and feelings so that people with other backgrounds could understand the work. Another interviewee is not concerned about being misunderstood. He believes that people must have the freedom to interpret his work just as they wish, asserting that this leeway will make him less responsible (Cartoonist 5).

Additionally, several cartoonists express concern about the Internet and its possibility to spread drawings across the whole world, setting their cartoons out of context. In recent years, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other channels have exploded the borders. The former Prime Minister of Norway, Jens Stoltenberg, once said: 'Every word said is spreading to all corners of the world with the speed of the light' (Kokkvold 2006:14). But this also applies to the image, making the interviewees concerned. One of them states: 'When you have an audience that includes the whole world, the possibility of misunderstanding and provocation is much bigger' (Cartoonist 1).

### In Norway – are we free now?

The following is based on answers from two interviewees with international backgrounds, numbered 6 and 7. Do they feel freer in Norway? The interviewees explain that they are far more independent in Norway than they were in their own home countries. The Norwegian readers have never reacted strongly or threateningly on their drawings. One interviewee (Cartoonist 7) believes that the explanation lies in his choice of themes – human rights and war. These topics do not harm others, he says.

However, they also cannot draw quite as freely as they did when they first arrived in Norway, as freedom of expression and press freedom have decreased during the last years. One of them says: 'We thought that Europe was different and safer, but the problem has arisen everywhere in the world' (Cartoonist 7). They believe the reason

is partly due to extremism and self-censorship. Both outline several topics one has to be careful with in Norway: women, Jews, and holy people as the Prophet and Jesus. In other words, the same topics as those their Norwegian colleagues mention. According to UNESCO, the world has seen ‘an increase of intolerance for opinions or factual reporting deemed by some to offend religion or morality’ (2014:31), thus raising challenges for journalists’ and editorial cartoonists’ press freedom and safety.

Cartoonist 6 is upset when explaining that freedom of expression became more restricted directly after the terror attack on Charlie Hebdo in 2015. Now he strictly regulates his drawings through self-censorship, especially concerning the topic of *religion*:

I have made many drawings, which have criticized Islam before, as Islam has many aspects that I disagree about. I published these drawings on my website. But after the Charlie Hebdo terror, I have made such drawings private. If anyone wants to see them, one must have access to the password (Cartoonist 6).

The above interviewee claims that his new stance is not due to fear, but to carefulness. As with their Norwegian colleagues, both interviewees now refrain from drawing Muhammad. Interviewees 6 and 7 have also become more conscious of how they execute a drawing: ‘Before I used a lot of text and speech bubbles. Today I have started to make more simple drawings that are easier to understand’ (Cartoonist 7).

## The visual development

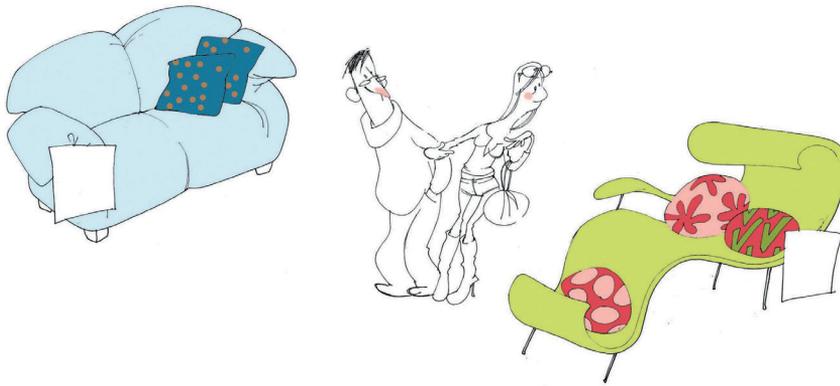
The majority of the editorial cartoonists state that their contemporary cartoons are stylistically similar to the ones made before the cartoon controversy. But has the uproar affected other visual choices? In this part, two drawings made before and after the controversy in 2005/2006, will be analysed.

The drawing of the couple from 2005 (picture 1), as well as the child scene from 2009 (picture 2), are both figurative. Both have motives made of shapes or other concrete items. The line is single and dominant and the colours have similar nuances. If we analyse drawing 1 through the pictorial layer, we can see a young lady with a slightly older conservative man. They wander past a stout blue sofa and a modern green and red chair. However, through the plastic layer we understand that the elements conceal several codes, representing the general election in Norway, which took place in September 2005. Conclusively, the caricature does not evoke feelings (pathos) through a narrative story, but is more based on the rhetorical appeal form – *logos* built on facts, logic and reasons. Ergo, one must know the society and facts about this election to understand the cartoon. *Logos* and *pathos* are two of the three rhetorical appeal forms, where rhetoric means the art of oratory (Fabricius & Roksvold 2010:11). It is also important in the visual utterance.

For instance, the colours, patterns and the two characters represent political ideologies. In the Norwegian context, blue is the colour of conservative parties, red

means socialism, whereas green represents liberalism and environmental politics. Thus, through the plastic content, the old blue couch is a symbol of the conservative-liberal politics of the Conservative Party (H) and the Progress Party (FrP). The modern green chair, on the other hand, symbolizes innovation and the social democracy of the red-green alliance in Norway – one of the pillows has a pattern that symbolizes the Norwegian Socialist Left Party (SV), one of the three parties in that alliance. The two other parties are the Labour Party (Ap) and the Centre Party (Sp).

The fact that the woman is leaning forwards indicates that the red-green coalition has a leading position in the election. Furthermore, there are two price tags. They indicate that people cannot be sure they will get what they are voting for. Ingebretsen points out that interpretations happen through cognitive linguistics, aimed at sensing specific acknowledgment (ibid:51). It is a form of parallelism within the rhetorical tool 'simile', which means comparison (2008:100f).



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner.

**Picture 1.** Caricature published in 2005

Four years later, i.e. three years after the cartoon controversy, the same cartoonist drew another caricature. The drawing (picture 2) was published with a comment about climate change and evokes a human drama. In contrast with drawing 1, this caricature contains emotional metaphors that tell a story (pathos).

However, the logical patterns (logos) are also a part of this caricature, but only if seen with the political text. Through the scene, the cartoonist tries to illustrate the world's leaders who struggle to successfully negotiate about climate change, blaming each other, rather than acting efficiently to bring about changes for a better environment.

Meanwhile, we see a child, who represents future generations. What will happen in the future? Since this is one of the major questions in the inflamed debate, the child is in the foreground of the drawing. The colours are essential, as they represent the plastic metaphors. Black characterizes the forces of darkness, the underworld, sorrow, misfortune and death, whereas white expresses innocence, purity and helplessness. Orange, finally, is the colour of fire, and indicates peoples' striving to achieve pleasure



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner.

**Picture 2.** Caricature published in 2009

(Bruce-Mitford 2009:281ff). Moreover, fire evokes the flames of hell that our planet is literally on fire – the temperature increases and this causes severe destructive changes.

Comparing the two cartoons shows that a slight visual change may have emerged. Whereas both contain clear lines, many metaphors, elements and symbols, the choices and the way they are composed seem to have changed. To clarify, the first drawing conceals many hidden codes that require knowledge and political interest within Norwegian society. The second drawing, on the contrary, may be easier to understand in a multicultural society. It incorporates fewer codes and puzzles, and since it is based on mutual human experiences it relies less on a specific cultural understanding.

The development may be explained by several factors. One of the major components is most likely the cartoon controversy of 2005/2006, as many editorial cartoonists suddenly realized how much power they operated with.

### A delicate act of balancing: stereotypes within a multicultural society

The concepts of freedom of expression and press freedom are essential pillars in the European democratic tradition. Their premise is: contradict and criticize what you want within the developed framework of the society. But where does the actual limit between infringement and freedom of expression reside? How much freedom does actually exist? A cartoonist is in the middle of this dilemma:

Once I received a letter from an exhibitor. It was something like: ‘You are not going to exhibit drawings that may offend those who are offended by that kind [of drawing]’. But this is impossible! I do not know what people perceive as offensive – it may

be everything. What should I draw then? Kitties?! There will certainly be someone who does not like that either. It has become completely hopeless (Cartoonist 1).

A report from UNESCO (2014:14) asserts that 'press freedom and safety are recognized as being an integral part of the wider landscape of freedom of expression and media development'. But the cartoon controversy and Charlie Hebdo attack demonstrated that it costs to convey opinions, express oneself and test the limits. It is understandable that a caricature – with its symbols, metaphors, codes and exaggeration – can be comprehended as a manipulation of people's beliefs, attitudes and actions. The caricature's power is well engrained in its technique, conveying a sense of urgency, contrast and dynamism (Becker 2008:123). Eisner (1996:27) also believes drawings can become sincerely overwhelming, as artists usually have more time to form the message. However, a cartoonist does not have much time to complete his work. People within the profession of satire do not operate as artists, but rather as journalists who have to abide by deadlines.

What is politically correct is a vital question within the freedom of speech debate and its restrictions. In Norway, the term, 'political correctness' is perhaps more relevant in debates within immigration and integration policies, but it has also, as a result of globalization, loomed large within the profession of cartoonist.

In 2007, there were about 6 per cent non-Western immigrants in Norway (Steien 2007:7). In 2016 the number had doubled to 12 per cent, according to Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå 2016). Undoubtedly, this is a challenge for a cartoonist, as every satire relies on stereotypes, prejudices and generalizations. Hansen says that the aim of stereotypes is to play with familiar concepts (1986:xi). However, many stereotypes are not usable anymore – cartoonists are afraid of being offensive against other cultures whose inhabitants now live in Norway. Interviewee 4 exemplifies that several stereotypes from the 50s do not work today:

You could say that the Norwegian cartoonists' perception of an African during the 50s would be considered offensive today. It probably was during that time as well, but it was not relevant because it was so far away (Cartoonist 4).

Contemporary satire using old stereotypes may be perceived as propaganda or a form of racism in a globalized world (Eisner 1996:17). Nevertheless, the old stereotypes and taboos are learned by heart, sometimes challenging cartoonists during short deadlines:

It was ten minutes to deadline and I was extremely tired. To finish the little Somali girl, I drew a hijab, and filled the girl all black in Photoshop. On the following day I thought: 'Jesus!' The girl was not only black and with a hijab, but she had also a too big mouth. I was a fool ... Suddenly she looked like one from the dumbest cartoons from the 30s (Cartoonist 1).

Becker asserts that there are many things one can learn from the cartoon controversy. One of them, she claims, is that 'there are very different image cultures, where we find visual representations integrated into traditions and systems of belief in ways that carry different meaning' (2008:117). The aim of cartoons is to embody cultural

identities and attitudes that exists in a humoristic way (Kjus & Kaare 2006:20), and this humour may sometimes come across as too aggressive. For many Western people it can be difficult to understand that the Danish cartoons' satirical line might have been offensive. However, drawing them was risky, as many people in Muslim countries viewed them as Western propaganda.

### Art that follows editorial ethical rules

Caricature discursively moves between art and journalism – ‘as a form of self-expression by an individual artist, while simultaneously framed within the institutional norms of editorial opinion in the press’ (Becker 2008:123). Yet, Frey and Gjerstad (2006) report that the visual comment tends to have more freedom than the written one because satire embodies a personal statement that can be interpreted differently. Also Cohn points out that while language must follow a grammatically correct structure, there are no rules dictating how an image must be structured (2012:5f).

Indeed, seen as separate drawings, cartoons could be interpreted as a form of individual critique of power structures and social conventions. Everyone has the right to express themselves through pictures, text, drawings and words. The minefield, however, occurs when satire is published in the newspaper, as one must take responsibility for a publication. Quickly, it obtains a journalistic form and is expected by society to embrace the newspaper's editorial position, ethics and norms. If the ethics within a drawing are not followed, the satire can be reported to the Norwegian Press Complaints Commission (PFU), a complaint commission of the Norwegian Press Association (NP). In that case, the caricature will be evaluated according to the journalists' Code of Ethics. If the commission upholds the complaint, the media organization which published the drawing, is required to publicly issue PFU's verdict. Of course, many media organizations perceive such judgements to be harmful to their organization's reputation. In cases such as these, the guidelines' point 4.3 will be particularly relevant: ‘Show respect for human individuality, privacy, race and belief’ (Norsk Presseforbund 2015).

One interviewee says complains to the Press Complaints Commission never involve cartoonists ‘because it represents humour and it is so difficult to frame it judicially. Legislation and free art do not mix together’ (Cartoonist 2). However, in 2006, when Finn Graff caricatured Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, complaints were raised to the Commission. In the drawing, Olmert was depicted as smiling, shirtless and with a machine gun in his hand. The drawing clearly referred to a scene in the movie *Schindler's List*, comparing the Israel-Palestinian conflict to the Jewish situation during the Holocaust.

Interestingly enough, the Commission's decision was not in favour to the complainant – Israel's ambassador in Norway. Instead the committee emphasized that satire's art form must have wide limits: ‘Satire, as part of freedom of expression, must be able to hurt and offend’, former Secretary General Stavrum underlined (Norsk Presseforbund 2006).

However, today's great willingness to misunderstand may open up a new discussion on whether we should limit the editorial cartoonist's freedom of expression through laws or not. Stavrum does not underestimate the gravity of punishing the media outlet that publishes an offending caricature, nor does she endorse a major constraint within the genre. She thinks that if major constraints on humour become acceptable in Norway, it may turn into censorship of peoples' subjective tastes (2015).

Another option may be to erase the whole § 135a (2013) from The Norwegian Penal Code. Then no speech would be legally considered discriminatory or offensive because the legislation would be perceived as fairer. The article is already under debate in Norway as it restricts freedom of expression, and few people have actually been convicted of violating the law.<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

Although freedom of expression and press freedom constitutes one of Norway's core values, they are not absolute; the Norwegian press has acknowledged that journalists have the power to make individuals suffer through public exposure and also that editorial cartoonists may inflict harm.

The working situation of the seven editorial cartoonists' in Norway demonstrates a tangible change over the last decade. The transformation is as much a result of developments globally as it is of transformation in European societies, and can be seen as a consequence of the most recent terror attacks and controversies initiated by drawings. Undoubtedly, it was easier for the Norwegian cartoonists to express themselves before the Internet and, in a homogeneous society, before immigration from non-Western countries started in the 1970s. Forty years later, extremism and fear of being misunderstood in a globalized world, have built high walls. Among other things, national and international cartoonists in Norway do not discount that terror could also happen in our country. As a result, they have started to limit their freedom of expression by self-censorship.

Furthermore, the reporting depicted in this study, illustrates that press freedom is also in danger. Because of globalization and multiculturalism, the focus on religion as a topic is now increasing considerably. Consequently it is challenging the old stereotypes and taboos that earlier made fun of other nations. Some editors feel negatively influenced by political correctness and, in some circumstances, censor drawings that do not conform to society's political views. Editorial cartoonists also report they are strongly affected by political correctness, which has limited their visual choices. Nevertheless, public censorship is not a common practice, and most of the cartoonists in Norway are still deciding the visual appearance freely without interference by their publishing supervisors.

On the other hand, cartoonists have become more afraid of being offensive. The controversy and multiple terror attacks initiated by drawings have made them realize

that caricature has reached a new level of power. Therefore, they often censor themselves by strongly mulling over ethical dilemmas. Nevertheless, the press' freest pen has still a wide range of visual possibilities and it almost never happens that the PFU upholds the complaints against caricatures. The complaint commission maintains that satire's humour must have a wide acceptance in Norway in order to secure the safety of public expression.

While the majority of the seven editorial cartoonists state that their contemporary caricatures are stylistically similar to the ones they made before the cartoon controversy in 2005/2006, a nuanced worldview has forced them to strive for more precision when choosing visual elements. According to the interviewees, the situation is challenging as it is marked by a high level of misconception. Many have therefore become more aware, cautious and thoughtful, and do not draw without knowing the codes and references that require special knowledge.

## Note

1. Theodore van Gogh was a Dutch film director who was murdered after having criticised the treatment of women in Islam.
2. Since 1997, only three cases concerning racism have ended up in the Supreme Court, and only two people have been sentenced.

## References

- Batty, David (2010). Somali charged with murder attempt on Muhammad cartoonist. *The Guardian*, 2 January 2010 [online]. Available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/02/kurt-westergaard-muhammad-cartoon-somali>> [Accessed 24 November 2016]
- Becker, Karin (2008). The twelve cartoons: a discursive inquiry. In Elisabeth Eide, Risto Kunelius & Angela Phillips (eds.) *Transnational media events: the Mohammed cartoons and the imagined clash of civilizations*. Nordicom, Göteborgs universitet, Göteborg, pp. 117-132.
- Berntsen, Bredo (1999). *Skarpt sett* [Sharply seen] Oslo: Andresen & Butenschøn AS
- Borgersen, Terje & Hein Ellingsen (2004). *Flytende bilder: Bildet i skriftkulturen. Analyse, teori, metode* [Floating images: The image in the writing culture. Analysis, theory, method]. Oslo: Cappelen Forlag AS
- Bruce-Mitford, Miranda (2009). *Tegn & Symboler. Opprinnelsen og betydningen* [Signs & Symbols. The origin and meaning]. Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS
- CNN (2006) Protesters burn consulate over cartoons. *Cable News Network*, 5 February 2006 [online]. Available at <[http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/02/05/cartoon.protests/index.html?\\_s=P-M:WORLD](http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiapcf/02/05/cartoon.protests/index.html?_s=P-M:WORLD)> [Accessed 19 November 2016]
- Cohn, Neil (2012). Comics, Linguistics, and Visual Language: The past and future of a field. (F. Bramflett red.) (2012): *Linguistics and the Study of Comics*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan
- Eisner, Will (1996). *Graphic Storytelling & Visual Narrative*. Tamarac: Poorhouse Press
- Fabricius, Julie & Thore Roksvold (2010). *Anvendt retorik. Tag sproget i munden* [Applied rhetoric. Take the language in the mouth], 3. edition. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag
- Freedberg, David (1991). *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: Chicago University Press
- Frey, Elsebeth & Leif Gjerstad (2006). Strekker strikken med streken [Stretching the elastic with the line], *Journalisten.no* 15 September 2006 [online]. Available at <<http://journalisten.no/story/40971>> [Accessed 4 December 2016]

- Gjestad, Robert Hoftun (2015). Ny rapport: Mer trusler og netthat mot norske journalister [New report: More threats and web hatred against Norwegian journalists], *Aftenposten.no*, 28 April 2015 [online] Available at <<http://www.aftenposten.no/share/article-7999275.html>> [Accessed 24 November 2016]
- Hansen, Thore (1986). *Smilende streker: et streiftog blant humorens mestere* [Smiling lines: a foray among comedy masters]. Oslo: Stenersen
- Idås, Trond (2013). *Krevende oppdrag. Hvordan mestre stress* [Demanding missions. How to cope with stress]. Oslo: Cappelen Damm AS
- Ingebretsen, Berit (2008). Metaforbasert tegning – undersøkt som et bildespråkssystem gjennom avistegninger av Finn Graff og Saul Stenberg med kognitiv metafor-teori som hovedredskap [Drawing based on metaphors – examined as a visual language system through editorial cartoons made by Finn Graff and Saul Stenberg with cognitive metaphor theory as the main tool]. Doctor of Philosophy. The Oslo School of Architecture and Design. Oslo: Unipub AS
- Johnston, Chris (2015). One dead and three injured in Copenhagen 'terrorist attack', *The Guardian*, 14 February 2015 [online]. Available at <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/14/copenhagen-blasphemy-lars-vilks-prophet-muhammad-krudttonden-cafe>> [Accessed 28 November 2016]
- Kjus, Yngvar & Birgit Hertzberg Kaare (eds.) (2006). *Humor i mediene* [Humour in the media]. Oslo: Cappelens Forlag AS
- Kokkvold, Per Edgar (2006). Preface: Ytringsfrihed bør finde sted [The freedom of expression should be incorporated]. In: Vejbjørn K. Selbæk: *Truet av islamister* [Threatened by Islamists]. Kjeller: Genesis Forlag
- Lien, Lars (2015). «... pressen kan kun skrive ondt om jøderne» Jøden som kulturell konstruksjon i norsk dags- og vittighetspresse 1905-1925 [«... The press only writes evil about the Jews» The Jew as a cultural construction in the Norwegian daily- and wittiness press from 1905 to 1925]. Doctor of Philosophy in history. Oslo: Institute of Archeology, Conservation and History, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo
- Norsk Presseforbund [Norwegian Press Association] (2006). Ambassadør Miryam Shomrat mot Dagbladet. PFU-sak 149/06 [Ambassador Miryam Shomrat against Dagbladet. PFU-case 149/06] [online]. Available at <<http://presse.no/pfu-sak/14906/>> [Accessed 3 November 2016]
- Norsk Presseforbund [Norwegian Press Association] (2015). Vær Varsom-plakaten [Ethical Code of Practice] [online]. Available at <<http://presse.no/pfu/etiske-regler/vaer-varsom-plakaten/>> [Accessed 14 November 2016].
- Verdens Gang (2015). Den norske blasfemiparagrafen er historie [The Norwegian blasphemy article is history]., 6 May 2015 [online]. Available at <<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/religion/den-norske-blasfemiparagrafen-er-historie/a/23447371/>> [Accessed 24 November 2016]
- Samuelsen, Reidun J. (2015). Al-Qaida i Jemen tar ansvar for Charlie Hebdo-angrep [Al-Qaeda in Yemen claims responsibility for Charlie Hebdo attacks] *Aftenposten*, 14 January 2015 [online]. Available at <<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/Al-Qaida-i-Jemen-tar-ansvar-for-Charlie-Hebdo-angrep-7860360.html>> [Accessed 24 November 2016]
- Shoichet, Catherine (2015) Garland, Texas, shooting suspect linked himself to ISIS in tweets. Cable News Network, 5 May 2015 [online]. Available at <<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/04/us/garland-mohammed-drawing-contest-shooting/>> [Accessed 28 November 2016]
- Statistisk sentralbyrå [Statistics Norway] (2016). Nøkkeltall for innvandring og innvandrere [Key figures for immigration and immigrants] 20 October 2016 [online]. Available at <<http://ssb.no/innvandring-og-innvandrere/nokkeltall/innvandring-og-innvandrere>> [Accessed 14 October 2016].
- Stavrum, Kjersti Løken (2015). Interview with the former Secretary General of the Norwegian Press Association, 4 May 2015 [Email]
- Steien, Solveig (2007). When Norway Was Almost at War: The Mohammed Cartoons Controversy in Norwegian Newspapers. Postgraduate. Oslo: Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo.
- The Norwegian Penal Code (2015). [online]. Available at <[https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLO/lov/1902-05-22-10/\\*#](https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLO/lov/1902-05-22-10/*#)> [Accessed 7 December 2016]
- UNESCO (2014). World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Paris: UNESCO
- Vogt, Judith (1978). *Historien om et image. Antisemittisme og antizionisme i karikaturer* [The story of an image. Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in caricatures]. Oslo: Cappelens Forlag AS
- Østbye, Helge, Knut Helland, Karl Knapskog, Leif Ove Larsen & Hallvard Moe (2013). *Metodebok for mediefag* [Method book for Media Studies]. 4. edition. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget

