

The discourse of danger in Denmark (2001-2006)

Discourse analysis of the Danish cartoon crisis

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“The deconstruction of identity is not the deconstruction of politics; rather, it establishes as political the very terms through which identity is articulated”

Judith Butler

Abstract

The Danish cartoon crisis was triggered by the publication of twelve cartoons of the prophet Muhammad by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in 2005 and had a significant impact on world politics. This paper tries to understand this crisis using a post-positivist approach to social reality. It asserts that the crisis can be understood discursively by applying the theory of discourse of danger to the Danish context (2001-2006). It analyses the political identity in Denmark, how it is constructed the meaning of “Danishness” and how the “Others” is constituted within this identity. This paper further argues that the cartoon crisis can be understood as a consequence to the domination of the discourse of danger in Denmark, by showing that Muslim immigrants in Denmark and the Islamic culture as a whole is considered a “threat” to the “Danishness”.

Keywords: Danish cartoon crisis, Muhammad cartoon crisis, Discourse of danger, The Politics of identity, Post-structuralism, International Relations.

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1. Introduction

In 2006, Denmark had to deal with the biggest crisis since WWII. After publishing twelve controversial cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* (*Jyllands-Posten*, 30-09-2005). One of the cartoons pictured the Prophet's turban as a bomb with a little fuse. It was written at the prophet's turban in Arabic the Islamic testimony phrase "there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". Other cartoons showed the prophet telling suicide bombers, "stop stop, we ran out of virgin", another cartoon showed him holding a sword and two women wearing the niqab in black clothes behind him. A cartoon also showed the prophet with two horns appearing from his turban. Those were the most controversial cartoons of the twelve. The tension has escalated after the Prime Minister of Denmark Anders Fogh Rasmussen refused to meet with the ambassadors representing countries with an Islamic majority. The crisis took the form of a clash of values between Denmark from one side supported by the "West", while Danish Muslims were on the other side supported by the "Islamic world".

International Relations (IR) scholars varied in their approach to the crisis. Lene Hansen (2011a, 2011b) from her side tried to define the moment when the crisis securitized, which happened according to her after publishing the cartoons. While Christine Agius (2017) approached the crisis using ontological security theory and the difference between political identity and multicultural policy in Sweden and Denmark. She explained how the crisis took different outcomes in two similar countries. Erin Wilson (2018), from another side, used the dichotomy; "civilized West" and "uncivilized Islam" to explain the Western discourse toward Muslims as an explanatory discourse to cartoon crisis and many other cases like immigration policy. From the inside of the Danish context, the anthropologist Peter Hervik (2011; 2012) studied this case by analyzing the rise of new-racist discourse in Denmark and the politicization of the Danish media.

This paper will analyze the Danish cartoon crisis using IR post-structuralism theory and discourse of danger as main concepts. This theory is based on a post-positivist approach to what is considered a "threat". This paper will argue that the Danish cartoon crisis is a

consequence of the discourse of danger in Denmark. The previous research will be included in this paper critically, especially Hansen's argument about the securitization of the cartoon, which took place according to her after publishing the cartoon. This paper will argue against Hansen's argument by mapping the discourse of danger and its domination in the Danish sphere before publishing the cartoon. The primary data that will be analyzed is the Danish prime minister's formal speeches, which will be contextualized with the broader context in Denmark.

The research question: How can the discourse of danger toward immigrant Muslims in Denmark (2001-2006) help us understand the Danish cartoon crisis?

2.Previous studies

Some of the previous studies that tried to analyze this case used a constructivist approach, but those studies left a gap that this paper will fulfill. For example, Lene Hansen (Hansen, 2011b) analyzed the case by showing the impact of the image in global politics, under what she calls “Visual securitization”. She argued that securitization happened after publishing the cartoons when the ambassadors from the “Muslim” countries were involved (Hansen, 2011b:66; Hansen, 2011a:365). She also claimed that the “bomb cartoon” was “ambiguous” from the beginning (Hansen, 2011b:67), and has no clear meaning that represents all Muslims. It took its interpretation as an Islamophobic cartoon later: “The cartoon does not, in sum, employ a clear-cut anti-Muslim demonizing strategy of depiction” (Hansen, 2011b:64). For Hansen, the twelve cartoons seemed innocent to most Danes (Hansen, 2011b:63), and the dichotomy, “West” and “Muslims”, became relevant after the process of securitization that began with the Muslim ambassador’s act toward the Danish government, and after that “West became possible” (Hansen, 2011b:66).

This paper agrees with Hansen that cartoons are meaningless on their own, and they need context to have such meaning. In contrast, This paper will argue against Hansen’s interpretation of the the context that made the cartoon securitized. This paper argues that this discourse previously existed, “West” and “Islam” as dichotomy constructed in the Danish discourse of danger before publishing the cartoon. Securitization was going on in the Danish discourse when the cartoon was published. In her approach to the cartoon crisis, Hansen did not show interest in the relation between securitization and national identity building. At the same time, it is the main issue of this paper's approach to discourse of danger. Besides, she took for granted the claim of the Danish prime minister and the Danish discourse about the crisis about the “freedom of speech”, or at least, she did not question it. This led her to explain the reaction of the others as they could be “unfamiliar with Danish debates and cartooning traditions” (Hansen, 2011b:63). By refusing to meet the eleven ambassadors, Rasmussen was motivated by the will to protect the freedom of the press

(Hansen, 2011b:62). She did not question this claim, which was the main argument of liberals during the crisis. As a Post-structuralist, the first mission is to examine pre-given and unquestioned concepts and identities. Hansen could not leave the myth of the Danish liberal discourse, she argued partly from inside this formal discourse. This paper will question the Danish national identity and the series of concepts linked to this identity, like freedom of speech and liberal tolerance. And the relation between this identity and the discourse of danger. It will be more precise when analyzing the Danish discourse of danger before the crisis, as I will do in the analysis section. Hansen's approach is the primary motivation to develop a new interpretation of the crisis by engaging critically with it.

Christine Agius (2017), another (IR) scholar, did a remarkable job in her approach to the Danish cartoon crisis by including the Swedish cartoon crisis in her analysis and comparing it with the Danish crisis. Agius approached this crisis using ontological security studies as the leading explanatory theory and its relation to identity. Identity analysis is vital to any constructivist approach in social science in general. Agius also questions the link between the Danish liberal discourse and its claim about "tolerance". Here, with Agius, we can see what was missing in Hansen's paper. Agius questioned those liberal concepts. She did not take it for granted, it is helpful to this paper. Denmark and Sweden are very similar states, with their values, economy, welfare, progress, human rights, gender equality. However, this similarity did not make them identical in their definition of what it means to be a liberal state. Swedes see the Nordic values directed to the future, something built and constructed in social planning and function to build the welfare state. In contrast, Denmark sees Nordic values by their historical meaning, which exists in the past, "to its wartime experience"(Agius, 2017:114). While Sweden is a multicultural country and historically felt proud of accepting immigrants, Denmark lacks this philosophy (Agius, 2017:115). It will be helpful to this paper's argument that what was considered "Danishness" is choosing between many options, which can be compared with Sweden as another liberal state with different immigrant policy, and different identification to the national identity.

When it comes to research from inside the Danish academic field, Peter Hervik (2011; 2012) came to the scene with an interest in the situation of Muslims and immigrants in Denmark. He puts this crisis as one of several events that reflected the tension between Danish society and its minorities. These tensions, according to Hervik, came after the rise of new nationalist and new racist discourses in Denmark (Hervik, 2011; 2012). The politicization of the Danish

media accompanied this new nationalist discourse. A “Zero-tolerance” policy emerged and dominated the political sphere in Denmark before the publication of the cartoon (Hervik, 2012: 217). Prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared a “Culture war” in his strategy toward immigrants (Hervik, 2012:218). Danish media played a crucial role in this shift to new nationalism (Hervik, 2011: xiii). However, Danish media was not neutral, according to Hervik. This point was missing in Hansen’s paper. Hervik is essential to this paper and the data collected and analyzed in the Danish media will help map the discourse of danger in Denmark. Hervik’s interest was to study racism and new racism in the Danish context. The same data can be used to make an IR paper, with IR theory like the discourse of danger, which is the aim of this paper. In his approach, Hervik considered some causal explanation, while this paper refuses this positivist aspect in understanding the crisis and understanding the Political identity in Denmark.

Another IR scholar, Erin K. Wilson (2018), wrote an interesting paper approaching this crisis. She argues that the dichotomy “evil, barbaric terrorists Muslim” against “good civilized Christian West” is behind the discourse of the West towards immigrants and Muslims. Wilson concluded that “The images suggest that the neat separation of religion and politics that has been aspired to in Euro-American societies since the enlightenment may be unraveling, or may never have existed” (Wilson, 2018:257). At the same time, Wilson’s approach was more abstract and tried to analyze the dichotomies that dominate the western discourse when handling the tension linked to Islam and the Islamic world. This paper’s concern is more about a specific case in Denmark, not about all the Western discourse. Furthermore, this paper tries to avoid this generalization because these dichotomies differ from one context to another. At the same time, Wilson helps to deconstruct the “liberal” claim of the danish “neutral” and “secular” identity and to map the unseen Christian dimension that constitutes Danish politics and its consequences in approaching Muslims and its effect on the cartoon crisis.

In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said (2003) showed that by studying the Western discourse about the East, mainly Muslim, “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture.” (Said, 2003: 1,2). This paper will consider this approach. In analyzing the Danish discourse

of danger, Islam is not external. On the contrary, it is internal in the national identity of the Danish.

This paper will argue that the current definition of “Danishness” that occupies the Danish sphere (2001-2006) is a matter of possibility between many other options. Hence, how Danes define themselves differs from time to time due to specific discourse. This definition has political effects by analyzing what Danishness means in the Danish political discourse and how this identity approaches the others. If the others considered a threat to Danish identity, this would mean that there is a domination of discourse of dangers. This discourse of dangers has an effect constituting the cartoons as a crisis.

3.Theoretical framework

3.1 Post-structuralism

Social reality is built constructively, it does not exist independently of us, and “discourse constructs the social world in meaning” (Jørgensen, M. and Phillips, L, 2002:6); Hence, it cannot be studied objectively. This post-positivist ontology forms the understanding of the discourse of danger. The theory that adopts this ontology is called post-structuralism. Due to this theory, everything constructs discursively, and there is nothing outside discourse.

Post-structuralism is a theory in social science and humanities, it has an impact on political science by adopting the philosophy of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, and others. (Devetak, 2005: ch7; Hansen, 2017: Ch10; Campbell and Bleiker, 2016: Ch:11). Post-structuralism argues against the orthodox approach of social science. The orthodox approach is based on epistemic realism and its understanding of the independence of the external world and the ability to describe it by using “universal scientific language” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:201). This positivist ontology has been challenged in the field of philosophy of social science; the “linguistic turn” changed our knowledge about language as a transparent tool to make us see the world objectively (Ibid). Language is considered a social practice and cannot separate

from the world like how Richard Rorty argues (Ibid: 202). This development happened in the philosophy of science. The validity of the positivist approach has been questioned; “the development of complexity science (including chaos theory and other new approaches of regularity). It extends even further the challenge to the ‘common-sense’ assumption of what counts as science and how it is conducted and links contemporary understandings of science with poststructuralism” (Ibid:202).

Post-structuralist refuse causality “Post-structuralism in IR has been decidedly anti-causal” (Kukri, 2008:131). Instead of causal analysis that positivists use, Post-structuralists do discourse analysis. Discourse has an effect and consequences, “I embrace a logic of interpretation that acknowledges that improbability of cataloging, calculating, and specifying the ‘real causes’, and concerns itself instead with considering the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another” (Campbell, 1992:4). Discourse has political outcomes, according to post-structuralists. Post-structuralists based their research on this relation. Michel Foucault, for instance, argued that some institutions in the modern western sphere appeared as consequences of previous dominant discourse, the birth of the prison, for example (Foucault, 2020) and the birth of the clinic (Foucault, 2003). Both are understood discursively, and the discourse has a concrete outcome. The same happened when Political scientists applied post-structuralism to study world politics. David Campbell is one of the founders of post-structuralism in Political science. His work *Writing security* is considered one of the essential books in IR to make sense of applying this theory in studying political phenomena. This paper will go through his theory in detail later.

Post-structuralism is a “dangerous term” (Hay, 2002: 216) according to Colin Hay, because “it shines a penetrating and often unwelcome light into murkier corners of the discipline. Its strategy is deconstructive” (Hay, 2002:217). Many criticized this theory that there has no goal to its critique “It is often accused of critique for its own sake” (Hay, 2002: 217). Furthermore, of being “unsystematic and unscientific” (Kurki, 2008:191). IR posts-structuralists refused this claim, “post-structuralism is in no sense antiscience” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:202).

Another criticism of post-structuralism accuses the theory of denying “reality” and denying the world’s existence, leading to absolute relativity (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016: 208).

Besides, they attack the role of language and claim that “everything is language” (Campbell, 1992:6). Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe responded to this claim by clarifying that poststructuralism does not deny the external existence of the object; it denies its existence outside discourse. There is a difference between total denying and denying its existence outside specific discourse. “The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has nothing to do with whether there is a world external to thought, or with realism /Idealism opposition...what is denied is not that...objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside of any discourse condition of emergence.” (Laclau and Mouffe, 2014:94). Discourse is not a tool in the hand of subjects to help to describe independent objects, “It is that which constitutes both subjects and objects” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:209).

Post-structuralism is valid to approach identity in political science since it “has important things to say about the concept of identity in political life” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016: 205). The way we identify what “we” mean has consequences on the state’s policy. “The ‘we’ who talk in this way do so from a particular vantage point often white, male, Western, affluent, and comfortable. These representations, then, are related to our identities, and they establish a discourse of identity politics as the frame of reference for world politics” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:197). The centrality of political identity in post-structuralism was the motivation of this paper to use this theory to study the Danish political identity. What does it mean to be Danish in a specific discourse, and its relation with immigrants and cultural debate about Islam, and how does this relate to the discourse of danger. By doing that, which is the goal for every post-structuralist approach, this paper will try to “establish the condition of possibility for pursuing alternative” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:217). At the same time, the analysis in this paper considers that it “is itself an interpretation of international politics” (Ibid), which means it can “be subject to the same ethos of critique that gave rise to it” (Ibid). This paper is not telling an objective truth; it is an interpretation, hence, it welcomes any critique.

3.2 The discourse of danger

The central concept in this paper is the “discourse of danger”, a theory developed by the IR scholar David Campbell (1992). Danger, according to Campbell, “is not an objective condition. It is not a thing that exists independently of those to whom it may become a threat” (Campbell, 1992:1). Furthermore, everything can be considered a risk, and “nothing is a risk in itself ” (Campbell, 1992: 2). Campbell used this concept to study the US Foreign policy as mentioned in the title of his book *Writing Security, United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. This book offers a “nonessentialist account of danger” (Campbell, 1992:x) instead of the classical analysis of the “external danger” (Campbell, 1992:x). Hence, Campbell’s theory is based on the post-positivist ontology and epistemology of post-structuralism. It is an application of post-structuralism in the field of International relations. This theory was also used to study the war in Bosnia in the 1990s (Hansen, 2017:171). It also makes it possible to address this question in the current western context, “Why ‘the Muslim’ has become such an important identity to construct” (Hansen, 2017:171). It is helpful in this paper and will be more apparent in the analysis section later.

Danger could be anything: war, refugees, crimes, AIDS, traffic accidents, drugs, pandemics, financial crises, smoking, and other issues. Anything could be dangerous due to a discourse. Immigrants, for instance, can be approached in different ways. They could be understood as support to the national economy. For example, Germany's experts said Germany needs 400 000 immigrants every year (Kaniewsk, 2019). Not just in Germany, Europe by 2025 needs to allow around 159 million new immigrants to its territory (O'Brien, R. and Williams, M, 2016: 187); hence, immigrants are a vital issue to Europe for its survival. In this sense, according to the numbers, it is a “danger” to prevent immigrants from coming to Europe, because this will cause damage to the western states. Immigrants in another discourse could be considered a threat to the national identity when this identity interprets others as dangerous. Historically, Blacks were considered a threat to the white race, especially during the domination of the scientific racism theory in the West, which had consequences on the racist policy against them. Jews in Europe, especially in the period between WWI and WWII, were considered a threat to the Aryan race which had political consequences.

In his book, Campbell covers the establishment period of the US and how the English settlers considered the Amerindians as a threat. The settlers considered themselves "New chosen people" (Campbell, 1992:107) and the US as "'New Eden' or 'American Jerusalem'" (Ibid). In this context, "the puritans provides the powerful 'Myth of Americ', in which colonization was fulfillment of scriptural prophecy and the subsequent American self was the product of divine intent. This mythical discourse was written into foreign policy texts of the postwar period... As a consequence, the puritans regarded the land they came to as belonging solely to themselves, and the people and objects encountered as obstacles to their destiny" (Campbell, 1992: 107,108). The English settlers tried to make the Amerindians to "forget their own religion" (Ibid:110). The religion of the others was considered a threat. Not just their religion which is considered uncivilized and barbaric.

The English settlers in this discourse about 'totally other' "went beyond the dichotomy of enslavement and colonization" (Campbell, 1992:111), Like how usually happened during the Western colonial period in Africa, Asia, and the "new world", nowadays North and South America. "Total other" has consequences with massacres against native people. "The English regarded the Amerindian of this region as so totally other that their pejorative attitude exceeded the condition of otherness that proceeds from the postulate of difference. No event more vividly demonstrates this than the war against the Pequots, in which an entire tribe of Amerininans was massacred in an act of revenge." (Campbell, 1992:111).

Campbell gave another example to understand the US involvement in the war against Iraq in 1991. The domination of the discourse of danger in the US approached Iraq as a threat to American identity. Hence, as a consequence of this approach, the US sent its troops to Saudi Arabia to fight against Iraq. President George Bush, legitimized his war, as matter of identity, by declaring: "In the life of a nation, we were called upon to define who we are and what we believe" (quoted in Campbell, 1992:3). The "threat" is a matter of interpretation, which has consequences for the US Foreign policy, with the decision to declare war. Iraq did not threaten the US, no direct physical threat, besides if it is because Iraq invaded Kuwait, Iraq invaded Iran before that, and had eight years of war against Iran. During that time, the US-supported Iraq against Iran. The "reality" in the positivist approach can not make sense of the US war, while by adopting a post-positivist understanding of danger, this war can be understood.

After introducing the theory that this paper will use and illustrating it with examples from the field of political science, those examples will make it easy for this paper to question the constitution of the Danish identity and deconstruct this discourse, in addition, what makes Muslims “Muslims” in this Danish national discourse. With all the differences between the members of the Muslim immigrant community in Denmark. There are atheists, non-religious, Marxists, liberals, feminists, and some have Islam just in their names. As post-structuralism emphasizes, actors, social entities, and things around us have no meaning, they take their identity due to how we construct them.

Muslims are synonyms to immigrants in the context I am analyzing. Most immigrants fled from countries with Muslims majority, like Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Syria. Therefore, this paper will put Muslims and immigrants in one category. So, talking about immigrants as a threat is linked to Muslims and vice versa. It will be more evident in the analysis section.

4. Method and Material

While the paper’s theory is about the discourse of danger, the grand theory, post-structuralism, believes that nothing exists outside discourse. Therefore, this paper will use discourse analysis as a method (Jorgensen, M. and Phillips, L, 2002: 49-57).

The primary data in this paper are the cartoons published in Jyllands-Posten (2005), another primary data will be the formal speeches of the Danish prime minister Rasmussen. The cartoons and Rasmussen’s speech will contextualize with broader Danish discourse. To do that, ”nodal Points”, “master signifiers”, “myths” and “key signifiers”, need to be defined (Ibid:50). “Nodal points organize discourses (for example, ‘liberal democracy’), master signifiers organize identity (for example, ‘man’), and myths organize a social space (for example, ‘the west’). All of those concepts refer to key signifiers in the social organization of meaning.” (Ibid). the key signifiers have no pre-given meaning, it takes their meaning from “chains of equivalence”. For instance, “West” shifted its meaning from being a geographical reference to a specific part of the world, to “for instance, ‘civilization’, ‘white people’, ‘the Christian church’ and ‘liberal democratic institutions’” (Ibid). so “West” has no meaning outside this chain. Liberal democracy, for instance, took its meaning when it links to

“freedom of speech” (Ibid). social entities, identities, discourses “are always established relationally” (Ibid). This method will be applied in analyzing the Danish context. What does “Danishness” as a master signifier mean, and its relationship with the “others”, like “Muslims” and “immigrants” and “Islam” in general.

To apply this method in analyzing the discourse of danger in the Danish context, I will be more specific about the definition of the theory of discourse of danger. Danger according to this theory, is not something that exists independently; it is created discursively through ideas and thoughts of those who feel threatened. It is part of creating and recreating the state identity. It functions with apparent dichotomies: “We/them”, “Inside/ outside”. This paper will apply the definition to the Danish context by searching for the representation of the discourse of danger in the collected data. The keywords in the search will be Islam, Muslims, immigrants, Islamic countries., and their link to threat, risk, uncivilized, danger, crimes, terrorism, cancer, and other threatening ideas. This link will be considered as a sign of discourse of danger.

Campbell, did the same, according to his analysis, the discourse of danger constituted the relation between the British settlers and the other minorities in the US. The others were considered an obstacle to the identity of the European settlers and genocides were the consequences of this discourse.

This paper will analyze the Danish context similarly: How the Danish identify themselves, what the “other” means to this identity, and how this affects the cartoon crisis. As argued earlier, “Muslims” and “immigrants” in this analysis are linked together because the immigrants are mainly Muslims. The first and most important data is the cartoon itself, published in Jyllands-Posten in 2005 under the title: “Muhammeds ansigt” or “The face of Muhammad” (Jyllands-Posten, 2005). Besides, this paper will analyze the formal speech of the Danish prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was the leader of the Conservative-Liberal Party (Venstre). Rasmussen was prime minister (2001-2009) before, during, and after the crisis. This data exists in the official websites of the Danish prime minister office: <https://www.stm.dk>, Rasmussen (2001; 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2004; 2005). The data included covers the period before until the cartoon crisis. The data was chosen carefully after going through all of Rasmussen’s formal speeches on the official website of

the Danish prime minister. The most important speech is the new year speech directed to the Danish people at the beginning of every year. To avoid arbitrariness and selectivity in choosing data, it included all his new year's speeches until publishing the cartoon in the analysis. Because it represents his main thoughts, policy, and analysis of what happened, his evaluation of that, and his future plans in his talk to all Danish people. It covers also all his ruling period before the crisis. Rasmussen's speeches to the Danish parliament (Folketing) included also. The speeches after the cartoon crisis will be ignored because mapping the discourse of danger as dominant discourse considered before the crisis in this paper argument. The speeches headed to specific communities or events will not be included because of the lack of generality and being irrelevant to the case study. Besides, this paper does not have enough space to include all his speeches. There is a methodological reason that discourse analysis does not search for objectivity and generalization, so few primary relevant texts are enough to do discourse analysis. Nevertheless, the data that have been collected is enough to make an argument about the discourse of danger, especially since these texts will contextualize with broader discourse from other secondary sources.

Peter Hervik's book, *The Annoying Difference* (2011), will be helpful to help me in my analyzing and contextualizing the primary data (Rasmussen's speeches) that have been chosen in border context. Hervik collected a massive number of data and analyzed a specific issue. His data includes articles written by populist leaders in Denmark published in the Danish newspapers, reports from the Danish institution of Human rights, articles from several Danish newspapers about racism, new nationalism, Danish political identity. It includes also Denmark radio reports about Islam, different articles, and editions of the newspaper that published the cartoon in Denmark, Jyllands-Posten covers the period from 1999 to 2006. Data from official websites of Danish ministers, like; ministry of culture, ministry of interior, ministry of education about integration, and Muslims in Denmark. Besides, academic studies about discrimination, racism, minorities, islamophobia, and right-wing parties. This paper will use his book as a secondary source, besides data from the previous research reviewed earlier. This data will contextualize with the primary data.

5. Analysis

In this part, by analyzing Rasmussen's speech and contextualizing it with a broader Danish context, the main goal of this analysis is to identify the “master signifiers”, “nodal points”, “key signifiers” and “myths” in the empirical material that will be analyzed. Furthermore, define the discourse of danger by analyzing how the "Danishness" due to this dominant discourse identifies itself with other immigrants, Muslims, and Islam in general. If those others consider a threat, dangerous, totally other, cancer, something need to fight, then we have a discourse of danger that constitute what “Danishness” means. By doing that, this paper will argue that domination of this discourse has political effect by constituting the cartoon as a crisis in Denmark.

The discourse of danger (2001-2006)

Rasmussen started his ruling period by addressing that shift in the Danish politic. From classical left-right division to a new society with “sharing certain values” (Rasmussen, 2011). He insists that Danish “are proud of the values on which Danish society is based. It is the consciousness of our Danish roots” (Ibid). Here, the “We”, the Danish identity as master signifier and its linked to historical values; Danish voted for this issue, not left policy. They voted for their “Danishness" to be confirmed.

Due to this conclusion and to secure those values, it needs stricter asylum policy “The rules governing asylum will be tightened” (Ibid). Immigrants, in his view, represent passive actors in Danish society. Immigrants are linked to crimes, they do not work “It is a problem that there are groups of young second-generation immigrants that are now involved in serious crime. Several of them reject the values on which Danish society is based, and they refuse to integrate into Danish society” (ibid). They are jobless, essentially choose to refuse danish values, and essentially refuse to integrate. Although, for Rasmussen, this is a fact, in positivist approach, does exist outside there, without questioning why they do not have a job, it is their fault because of their own values, we will see later in this paper how those values mean

basically Islam when it comes to contextualize this context with the Danish broader political context. Denmark therefore according to Rasmussen needs to have a strict policy against immigrants because they threaten the society. “We have to face the facts. We must tighten our immigration policy; otherwise deepening chasm will open between the population groups in Danish society” (Ibid). While immigrants represent crimes, and they are considered passive actors, they refuse to integrate without a job. The Danish people represent the opposite, “Danes are industrious people” (Ibid). As has been mentioned before, immigrants and Muslims are synonymous in this discourse, this will be clearer later.

Denmark, according to Rasmussen, is part of a broader western society, which has similar good values; freedom, democracy, justice, fairness (Ibid). That is why Denmark showed its solidarity to the US after 9/11 against the “power of darkness”. Although 9/11 is an attack on “The free world” (Rasmussen, 2002), this war represents a form of a clash of values and clash of civilizations. “The United States has been identified as an enemy of terrorist groups around the world. It is no accident. For the United States, it represents everything that religious fanatics and ruling tyrants fear and despise. American society is built on ideas of personal freedom, democracy, human rights, and religious tolerance” (Rasmussen, 2002). So, it is a war between the good free western world against religious terrorist groups. We can see here that Denmark is not part of this war in the positivist sense, no one attacked Denmark. So, what makes Denmark part of this war is their mythical “Western” identity, and the “nodal points” that represent this identity are liberty, peace, democracy, development, freedom of speech. Those values have been “threatened” by those who do not believe in these good western values. Therefore, it is “dangerous” which is interpreted discursively. We will see later in this paper how this picture about terrorist religious groups will include all Muslims in some aspects of the Danish political discourse.

The “West” as “myth” took its meaning discursively as a “key signifier” by linking itself in a “chain of equivalence” to “nodal points” such a freedom of speech, liberal democracy, peace, and civilization. It loses its geographical understanding by excluding those who live in the geography of the West from being “Western” because they do not have those values. Likewise, how to be Danish has nothing to do with Danish citizenship in this discourse, as much it is a matter of values. “Values” are the main “key signifiers” to Rasmussen’s political worldview in all his speeches. In this discourse, “Danishness” means Western values, freedom of speech, democracy, peace, harmony, while Muslims Immigrants refer to

passiveness, crimes, and violence. Rasmussen did not question in his speech the previous history of 9/11. It happened because of values; that is why he joined the war on terror. As Maja Zehfuss mentioned, “‘September 11’, caused the war on terrorism . It is as if ‘September 11’ were ‘an “uncaused” cause’” (quoted in Devetak, 2005: 166-167) or as Judith Butler argued that it looks like “There is no relevant prehistory to the events of September 11” (quoted in Devetak, 2005:167). Ignoring this prehistory is crucial to the constitution of the discourse of danger, like how we will see. The relation between Denmark and Afghanistan’s war returned to the 1980s when Denmark and the US supported Islamic “fundamentalist” groups (Hervik, 2011:28-31). The goal was to fight against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. They supported "fundamentalists" against the “secular” communist government in Kabul. Denmark was involved in this war, with Lars Lokke Rasmussen from Venstres party being a key figure, who worked later as a minister in Anders Fogh Rasmussen Government and worked as the Danish prime minister (Hervik, 2011:30). Lokke Rasmussen traveled to Afghanistan to meet with “Mujahedeen” and showed solidarity during their war against the Soviet Union (Ibid). He also supported them with 120,000 Dollars in the name of his party Venstres (Ibid). The group with the most radical interpretation of Islam was a friend to the Rasmussen party and considered a fighter for freedom in the 1980s. It supports the argument of this paper's theory that danger is a matter of interpretation and anything can be considered a threat. The ordinary Muslim could be a threat, and the radical Islamist a friend, it depends on which discourse is used to define the actor. It is also vital to show the construction of the discourse of danger in Denmark and its relation with Denmark’s Muslims.

In 2003, Rasmussen showed more concern about Muslim immigrants as a threat. In the new year's speech in 2003, a quarter of his speech was about immigrants' Muslim and Islamic culture as a threat. He brought to his speech a specific case about the behavior of “indigenous Imams” in Denmark and that “It is medieval religious thinking that we must distance ourselves from and fight against” (Rasmussen, 2003). However, He did not hesitate to declare the supremacy of the Danish identity over others:“for far too many years we have been too foolish. We have not dared to say that one is better than another. But we have to do that now.” (Rasmussen, 2003). In the same year, Rasmussen declared his policy about the “Culture war” and “zero tolerance” policy: “It is actually my opinion that setting the agenda in the debate on values changes society much more than those changes of the law. When I speak broadly about culture: it is the outcome of the culture war that decides Denmark's

future. Not economic policies. Not the technocratic changes of the judicial fortune. What is decisive is who has the fortune of setting the agenda in the debate of values” (Rasmussen, 2003 quoted in Hervik, 2012: 218).

In his new year speech about the supremacy of the Danishness, Rasmussen's statement was considered as a sign of xenophobia and racism according to the European Monitoring center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), (2003:76). Rasmussen's statement can be contextualized with the broader Danish context. From 2001 to 2003, the EUMC also noticed a shift from Islamophobia in Denmark to anti-Muslimism: “Islamophobic attitudes seem increasingly to take the form of ‘anti-Muslimism’ as an institutional and widely accepted discourse that has a certain functional role” (EUMC, 2003:76). Rasmussen's speech reflected this increased hostile discourse toward Muslims, as well as the hegemonic discourse in Denmark during this period. “Danish political discourse casts Danish culture as ‘superior’ to ‘uncivilized’ Islamic culture...Islam is regarded as a threat to values such as democracy and modernity” (Agius, 2017:117). This discourse made it hard for Muslims to be Danish: “Danish, for instance, makes it difficult for outsiders to be able to belong because outsiders cannot occupy the category of ‘authentic Dane’” (Agius, 2017:120). The discourse of danger also excluded the “native” Danish who converted to Islam of the “Danishnesses”, which they regarded as “enemy within”, “national traitors,” and “interior others” (Agius, 2013:248). Muslims in Denmark are considered “totally other” and this “otherness” has political consequences. Jesper Langballe, a member of parliament from the Danish people party, the party who supported Rasmussen in his Government in 2001, declared in 2002 that “Islam must be fought like plague similarly to communism and Nazism” (Hervik, 2011:1). The same approach to Islam came from another member of the Danish parliament from the same party, Soren Krarup, who said that “Islam must be fought like Nazism” (Hervik, 2011:1). Those statements can be contextualized with Rasmussen's policy about “Culture war”. The discourse of danger seems very clear in the Danish discourse before the publication of the cartoon. It is not just present in the political discourse but also in the media, as will be shown later.

Rasmussen (2004) defended Denmark's decision to participate in the US-led war on Iraq in 2003, in the same speech he also criticized the immigrants' “ghettos” in Denmark. He ignored Denmark's involvement in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and its relationship to the refugee crisis. War makes refugees who will come to countries like Denmark. This war was considered due to President Bush and his allies like Rasmussen as a war against “evil”.

Iraq or Afghanistan has nothing to do in the positivist approach to become an enemy to Denmark; neither did they attack Denmark nor threaten it. Campbell used the same argument to explain how the discourse of danger makes sense in his analysis of the US war against Iraq in 1991 (Campbell, 1992:3).

Peter Hervik (2011) noticed that with the rise of Rasmussen's Government and his alliance with the Danish people's party, the media in Denmark shifted to more politicization toward far-right policies. The Danish media constituted by the discourse of the cultural war which motivated Hervik to write his book "to expose the politicization of Danish new journalism" (Hervik, 2011:xii). Jyllands-Posten, Denmark Radio, and other media played a crucial role in this shift to new nationalism "that marginalized those who were ethnically different (particularly Somali Refugees)" (Hervik, 2011:xiii). Danish media was not neutral and according to Hervik, this point was missing in Hansen's paper. This point is vital to understanding how the cartoons have constituted a crisis. Constituting immigrants as "annoyingly different" (Hervik, 2011:xii) has "consequences for political representation and everyday lives of ethnic minorities in Denmark" (Hervik, 2011:xii). As argued before, the discourse of danger has political consequences, and the Danish media constituted by, and played a role in constituting this discourse of danger. Jyllands-Posten, according to Hervik, was crucial in building this discourse, the same newspaper that published the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in 2005.

Hervik, in his book (2011), covered how Islam and Muslims represented in Jyllndes-Posten since 2001, Islam was represented in this largest Danish newspaper as an enemy: "all Muslims represent danger, the Middle Ages, and darkness, which Danes must defend themselves against" (Hervik, 2011:133-134). Even the Muslims who integrated into the Danish society was considered as a "threat", "The young Danish Muslims in the Social Liberal Party are represented in relation to 'other Muslims' such as Taliban of Afghanistan, and the regime in Iran through the use of single monolithic category of 'Muslim'" (Hervik, 2011:133). Same "nodal points" represents all Muslims in the discourse, they are "terrorists" like Taliban. While the Taliban can not be understood without the generous support Islamists in Afghanistan received from Denamrk, the US, and the other Western countries during the Cold War (Hervik, 2011:28-31).

When Hansen claimed that the cartoons in *Jyllands-Posten* were not securitized until the involvement of the Muslim ambassadors, she ignored the previous history of this newspaper. A Series of provocative headlines were published in *Jyllands-Posten* in the period before the cartoon's publication, constituted by the discourse of danger, such as "Immigration will change Denmark" in 1999 (Hervik, 2011:135) and "Islam's dirty face" in 2001, by linking Muslims in general to Taliban (Hervik, 2011:138). Another headline considered Islam as "Faces of Darkness" (Hervik, 2011:139). Here, we can see that the same terms have been used by Rasmussen and other members of his government and his allies from the Danish people's party, which also led to the domination of the discourse of danger in Denmark before the publication of the cartoons. *Jyllands-Posten* is one of the largest newspapers in Denmark with 800,000 daily readers (Hervik, 2011:133), in such a small country like Denmark with around 5.8 million population. It means that the majority of the educated people read this newspaper. So, when Hansen argued that the cartoon seemed "innocent" to most Danes, she ignored this previous discourse. Hansen attempted this contradiction when she asked "why did something which to most Danes seemed as innocent as 12 cartoons become the catalyst for such dramatic event? Why were the cartoons securitized?" (Hansen, 2011b:63). She ignored the discourse of danger that securitized the relation with Islam and Muslims before the cartoon.

How can Hansen explain the "sensitivity" of the Danes when it comes to publishing cartoons about Jesus? The leading editor of *Jyllands-Posten* rejected publishing cartoons about Jesus. He legitimized this censorship by saying: "I do not think the readers of *Jyllands-Posten* would be pleased with the drawings. I think they would cause outrage. That's why I won't use them" (Volkery, 2006). Here again, we can see the difference in the balance of power: while the Christian Danes own all the media and decide what should be published and what should not, the Muslim Danes have no similar position. Furthermore, as the philosopher Slavoj Žižek comments on this case, "No less convincing case can be made against the West. It soon became known that the same Danish newspaper that published the Muhammad caricatures, in a blatant display of bias, had previously rejected caricatures of Christ as too offensive" (Žižek, 2008:108).

Hansen took for granted the liberal claim of freedom of speech in Denmark and that the actors that engaged in the crisis from Muslim sides were "unfamiliar with Danish debates and cartooning traditions" (Hansen, 2011b: 63). The most critical point to any analysis in post-

structuralism is the “power-relation”. Even beyond the Foucauldian understanding of power, which Hansen claimed she used in her paper, according to the classical approach, like power as “agenda-setting” due to Steven Lukes, the media should be questioned due to this power analysis. Hansen could not question this “power-relation” because she took the Danish claim of freedom of speech for granted. Hervik (2011) made it clear that the Danish media was not neutral, rather it was part of discourse that constitutes Islam as a “threat”, and as opposed to what “Danishness” means according to the new-nationalist discourse in Denmark.

Rasmussen talked from a liberal point of view, that emphasizes the freedom of speech which is the primary “nodal point” in his argument. In his debate in: *Is critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury, and Free Speech*, (2009), with Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, and Saba Mahmood, the anthropologist Talal Asad talked about the cartoon crisis and its relation to freedom of speech. He questioned this Western claim and refused to take it for granted. He argued that the West has its own taboos (Asad, 2009). Žižek also addressed doubts about the freedom of speech: “We should examine the various prohibitions and limitations which underline the so-called freedom of press in the West. Is not the Holocaust a sacred and untouchable fact? At the very moment when the Muslim protests were raging, the British historian David Irving was in an Austrian prison serving a three-year term for expressing his doubts about the Holocaust in an article published fifteen years earlier” (Žižek, 2008:108,109). The dichotomy that Rasmussen based his argument on is based on the West’s unquestionable claim of freedom of speech. At the same time, Muslims are considered a threat because they are interpreted as people that can not be accepted and are unfamiliar with this tradition.

A Danish people’s party politician stated that “Islam is not religion in the traditional sense, rather it is an international terror organization” (quoted in EUMC, 2003:77). The cartoon that draws the turban of the prophet Muhammad as a bomb represented this discourse about Islam as a terrorist religion. In their report two years before publishing the cartoons, the EUMC concluded that: “Islamophobic statements are increasingly taken for granted, not only in serious mass media but also in books published by well-reputed publishers” (EUMC, 2003:77). The leading editor of Jyllands-Posten sensed that the Danish people would feel insulted by publishing a cartoon about Jesus. While the Danes, according to Hansen can not understand the reaction of Muslims. Their anger, their feeling that they are insulted by the majority who has all the power, that the cartoon is part of a series of daily insults by the Danish media and the Danish political class. Their feeling of powerlessness in the state in

which they are citizens. “The Danish Muslims did for months try the ‘European’ path of dialogue, asking to be seen by government authorities. They were ignored. The reality behind all this is the sad fact of the rising xenophobia in Denmark, signaling the end of the myth of Scandinavian tolerance” (Zizek, 2008:108). They could not be seen because of the domination of discourse that made them outsiders. They are not Danish because the discourse of Danishness with its “nodal points” excluded them. hence, they are considered as “totally other” and a “threat”.

On the 12th of October 2005, a group of ambassadors from countries with an Islamic majority asked to meet with Rasmussen, considering the cartoon deeply offensive (Financial Times, March 21 2006). Rasmussen did not answer until 21 October and refused to meet with them (Ibid). This was the most crucial moment in the crisis, followed by an escalation of violence at the international level (Ibid). Hansen explained Rasmussen's motivation for refusing this meeting, “for him-Rasmussen- to meet with the ambassadors would be tantamount to compromising the freedom of speech” (Hansen, 2011b: 62). The dominant discourse that led to Rasmussen's behavior prevented him from meeting those Muslim ambassadors. It happened due to his “culture war” and “zero-tolerance” policy, and that there are people who are better than the other like in his speech (2003). “The refusal of Denmark’s prime minister to meet with 11 ambasoder from Muslim countries is indicative of this stance. Similarly, Jyllands-Posten's claim that Muslims in Denmark should be insulted, mocked and ridiculed simply because they are Muslims is a strategy of such of confrontation” (Hervik, 2012: 2017). Rasmussen did not hesitate to send Danish soldiers to invade other countries like Afghanistan and Iraq and defended this decision by linking it to the Danish liberal values (Rasmussen, 2001; 2002; 2004). However, in the Iraqi case, it was an illegal war; he did that without permission of neither the United Nations (UN), which is considered a liberal institution nor from those Islamic countries that he invaded with the US-led coalition. His behavior, by not meeting the mulism ambassadors and joining the illegal war against Muslim countries is understood as a consequence of the supremacy that he gave to the Danish identity in his speech, and the discourse of danger (2003).

The comparison that Agius (2017) did between Sweden and Denmark is also helpful, supporting this argument to understand Rasmussen’s behavior toward Muslims ambassadors. The difference lies between the Swedish multicultural policy and the Danish monocultural policy. Sweden did not consider the Mulsim minority as a threat. Due to this background,

prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt met with the Muslim ambassadors when the cartoon crisis occurred in Sweden. He showed them his understanding that Muslims were upset “But that it was not within his power to control the mass media” (Larsson and Lindekilde, 2009:369). He assures them that “Sweden is a country where Christians and Muslims live side by side” (Ibid), but that law in Sweden prevents him from taking any action against media. As a consequence of this meeting, “The large majority of Swedish Muslims seemed to understand the position of the Swedish government, and as result, the situation could be handled peacefully” (Larsson and Lindekilde, 2009:369).

Reinfeldt was also a Scandinavian liberal leader who believed in the freedom of speech, but he did not dominate by the discourse of danger that approached Muslims as a threat. He did not interpret the ambassadors' meeting as something against his liberal worldview. The meeting did not make him forbid the cartoon, he just explained to them his position. He recognized them and made them a visible part of society.

The cartoon itself has no meaning, that is true, but it took its meaning due to the previous dominant discourse of danger. Discours of danger constituted the “Danishness” as a supreme identity that felt threatened by the others; the other was the Muslim immigrants. Islam and Muslims are constituted as outsiders and threats that need to be insulted and fought inside this discourse. The cartoons of the prophet Muhammad represented this discourse and constituted the crisis as a consequence of this discourse.

6. Conclusion

The aim of This paper is to understand the Danish cartoon crisis using the IR theory of post-structuralism with its post-positivist ontology and epistemology. The central concept was the discourse of danger. Using this theory, I argued that the discourse of dangers In Denmark constituted Islam and Muslim immigrants discursively as a threat to the Danish identity, which had political effects in constituting the caricature of the prophet Muhammad as a crisis. The goal was to provide a leading theoretical argument to analyze this case empirically. The

difficulty with this approach is that it is untestable. At the same time, there is instead of testing it, an opportunity to engage with it by questioning its assumption or applying it in another context with further empirical analysis.

This theory is valid to study various issues linked to political identity and national security. By approaching security in a Post-positivist way, this theory challenges the positivist sense of the “threat” that dominates the classical IR Theories, like Realism, Liberalism, Marxism. During the last decades, those theories that dominated the study of IR treat post-structuralists as “unwelcome asylum seekers from a distant war zone” (Campbell, 1992:210). It is not strange that asylum seekers and immigrants are one of the main interests of this theory. post-structuralism is “motivated by a deep normative respect for others, leading to questioning of all universal (and universalising) claims.” (Hay, 2002:226). The theory proved helpful to the feminist theory, for instance, in Judith Butler’s works, and post-colonialism in the works of Edward Said.

As Campbell mentioned, this theory “establishes the conditions of possibility for pursuing alternative” (Campbell and Bleiker, 2016:217). This theory started by addressing its philosophical assumption, while other IR theories ignore that aspect and take their ontology for granted. So it makes it easier to search for an alternative when the researcher makes the reader aware of the assumption that constitute the case study. By deconstructing the social phenomena and unveil its ontology and epistemology this will help to open the door to “pursuing alternative”. In line with it, this paper argued that the current “Danishness” is just a possibility that has political effect and consequences. Post-structuralism has a lot to say in political science, with its sophisticated philosophical toolkit, which can shine a light “Into the murkier corners of the discipline” (Hay, 2002: 217). Some of those corners are invisible to the positivists’ theories.

When it comes to Campbell’s theory, the discourse of danger, it developed before almost thirty years, during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Hence, it needs to reevaluate considering new issues like globalization, global terrorism, immigration, new racism, and many other global issues. It could be the goal of future research.

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