

Handling Crisis Communication in an Intercultural Context

Arla in the Cartoon Controversy - What kind of cultural barriers did Arla face when handling the crisis in the Middle East?



Nawal Sadi – MSc. In English and Intercultural Market Studies
Advisor: Simon Ulrik Kragh
Copenhagen Business School anno 2009

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Krisehåndtering i en interkulturel kontekst.

Fokus på Arla i Muhammed-krisen. Hvordan håndterede Arla Muhammed-krisen i Mellemøsten, og hvilke kulturelle barrierer stod de overfor?

Skrevet af: Nawal Sadi. Cand.ling.merc. i Engelsk og Interkulturelle Markedsstudier.

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Abstract

Denne afhandling fokuserer på hvordan Arla håndterede Muhammed-krisen i Mellemøsten, set ud fra en interkulturel kontekst, og har til hensigt at bygge bro mellem de involverede kulturer.

Der er således fokuseret på perioden januar 2006 hvor Arla mærker de første tegn på boykotten, til april 2006, hvor Arla meddeler, at deres varer atter er kommet tilbage på hylderne i de arabiske supermarkeder. Der er dog inkluderet hændelser, udtalelser, episoder mv. inden ovennævnte periode, for at skabe en kohærens, og ligeledes en forståelse af hvorfor krisen udvikler sig på sådan en måde i Mellemøsten.

Afhandlingens har sit udspring i den amerikanske PR-forsker Timothy Coombs, tre-trins model, som sigter mod, at give en virksomhed et bedre overblik over diverse hændelser før, under, og efter en krise, samt eventuelle løsningsforslag. Ifølge dette perspektiv udgør relationen mellem en organisation og dens stakeholderer selve kernen i både det strategiske og det praktiske PR-arbejde. Ligesom vi skal se med Arla og dennes relation til forbrugerne i Mellemøsten. Dog var Arla klemmt som en lus mellem to negle, da boykotten brød ud, idet de arabiske forbrugers vrede ikke var rettet mod virksomheden som sådan, men mod Jyllands-Posten og den danske regering. Da Coombs model ikke understøtter det interkulturelle kontekst af krisen, har jeg inkluderet Simon Ulrik Kraghs afkodningsmodel som sigter mod at afkode og indkode intenderede såvel som ikke-intenderede, og verbale som nonverbale budskaber i bestemte kontekster. Sidstnævnte vil give en dybere forståelse af de forskellige hændelser både i Danmark såvel som i Mellemøsten. Endvidere er det værd at holde de to verdenssyn, eller civilisationer om man vil, op mod hinanden, for henholdsvis at forstå danskernes liberale syn på tegningerne vs. den muslimske/arabiske vrede, og krænkede følelser der gjorde sig gældende i den arabiske verden.

Intentionen med ovennævnte er ikke blot for at skabe forståelse inden for de rammer der gør sig gældende. Men det er også intentionen at nå frem til den interkulturelle forklaring, som fik Arla til at udgive en annonce i de 25 mellemøstlige aviser, hvor de tog kraftig afstand fra både tegningerne, og Jyllands-Postens grundlag for at udgive tegningerne. Annoncen blev mødt med

kraftig modstand fra det danske bagland, idet virksomheden blev beskyldt for henholdsvis at tale med to tunger, og give afkald på de danske frihedsrettigheder, for i stedet at bukke under for totalitære regimer. Mens Arla' forretning så småt var ved at vende tilbage i Mellemøsten, befandt virksomheden sig pludselig i en ny krise i Danmark pga. annoncen. Men Arla gjorde alt forklare de danske forbrugere at virksomheden var et offer i denne sammenhæng, og at de ikke bukkede under for nogen. Som vi skal se med Arla, stiller det globale og kulturelle sammenspil nye krav til virksomheden, der nu i videre udstrækning end tidligere skal kommunikere og skabe sit eget ståsted, som kan udfordres af medarbejdere, kunder, medier og offentlighed. Endvidere må den globale orienterede organisation til stadighed være opmærksom på sine interne samt eksterne relationer, idet, der samtidig er behov for at forbinde værdier og kulturer.

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1. INTRODUCTION

12 controversial cartoons of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad published in Jyllands-Posten on 30 September 2005. Triggered what came to be known as the second largest event in Danish history since World War II, namely the Cartoon Crisis. The cartoons were accompanied by an article, by cultural editor, Flemming Rose, in which he explained the background to the cartoon series, and added:

“Some Muslims reject modern, secular society. They make demands for special treatment when they insist on special consideration for their religious feelings. That stance is irreconcilable with a secular democracy and freedom of expression where you have to be ready to accept insult, mockery, and ridicule. It’s not always pleasant and nice to experience, and that doesn’t mean religious principles should be made fun of at all costs, but those considerations are secondary in this context.”

Five months later, both the cartoons and this statement, were the cause of, the boycott of Danish products, burning embassies, death threats against Danish cartoonists, and more than 150 victims in violent demonstrations. It is in this context, that the Danish-Swedish owned dairy, Arla Foods, being the worst afflicted companies during the crisis, enters the scene. More precisely, the company entered the scene in January 2006, as the sanctions on Danish products in the Islamic world were initiated. The Cartoon Crisis reflects not only a political crisis for the Danish government. However, it also indicates a religious and cultural crisis for the Danish nation, being considered the second largest media event in Danish history since World War II, only outdone by the 9/11 attacks on World Trade Centre.

In addition, the crisis contains many dynamic and complex processes, where many senders and receivers communicate to, with, against, pass, or about each other, across various intercultural contexts (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:252). It is especially the intercultural context in the crisis, which I am interested in; as I, in this thesis, wish to shed the light on how Arla handled the crisis communication situation, the company experienced in the Middle East, from an intercultural perspective. Very little has been written about how the crisis was handled in the Middle East, as most theses written so far, focuses on how Arla handled the crisis in Denmark. It is not a coincidence that, I choose to write about this subject. Firstly, I am very interested in crisis communication and the way it is handled, especially in an intercultural context. Secondly, I was

personally affected by Jyllands-Posten's cartoons, because of my background, and felt that Muslims were misunderstood, when debating the issue in Denmark. Therefore, I aim at clearing the room for thoughts and bridge the gap between the cultures involved as I go along, as we witnessed a clash between two very different worldviews, with each their own set of rules, set of values, and set of norms.

It is however, essential to highlight the situation Arla found itself in all of the sudden. The Muslim demand was primarily, pointed at Jyllands-Posten and the Danish government who refused to apologise for the cartoons. Therefore, the company could not match for the situation in the first place, as it became one of the offers of Jyllands-Posten's incident. In addition, the decisive incident construed differently within the boundaries of at least two different socio-cultural orders; should the cartoons be construed as a harmless satiric text of self-censorship and freedom of expression (Jyllands-Posten and the majority of the Danes)? Alternatively, should it be construed as a crude violation of other people's religious feelings (political and religious leaders in Denmark and the Middle East, and the majority of the Muslims)? It is among other things, the existence of the two different socio-cultural orders, which makes it hard to perceive each other correctly (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:304-305). Put differently, it is the codes and encodes that is in evidence in the intercultural context that makes it difficult for the involved parties to interact and perceive each other correctly. Indeed, the Muhammad cartoon controversy did throw a number of Danish companies, among those Arla, into a survival battle in key markets. They were up against cultural forces they have not met before, but which will play a growing role in the global economy from today.

Accordingly, I reach to the following research question

How did Arla experience the Cartoon Crisis in the Middle East? What might serve to explain respective the Middle Eastern reactions and the Danish reactions? What kind of cultural codes did Arla face during the crisis, respectively in the liberal Denmark as well as in the Islamic Ummah? Has Arla been able to set up principles for a crisis preparedness that enables the company to handle crisis better?

1.1 Delimitation

The research question will mainly be attempted through a cultural analysis of how Arla approached its customers in the Middle East in order to save its market shares and prevent losses. Moreover, the Cartoon Crisis is a very complex one containing many elements, which cannot be covered by the pages of this thesis. At first I wanted to focus on how Arla handled the crises in Jordan, however I realized early on, that it would be too narrow, as I naturally will be mentioning how Arla handled the crisis in general, as they generally speaking, experienced the same problem throughout the Middle East. I have therefore chosen to focus on the period from late January 2006, when the boycott of Danish products began, to the beginning of April, where Arla stated that they had started gaining foothold in the Middle East. However, I will be mentioning incidents that took place both in Denmark and the Middle East before the boycott was initiated, in order to create coherence and understanding of why Arla choose the strategy of publishing the ad. The cultural analysis will take a starting point in the ad Arla published in Middle Eastern newspapers when dissociating itself from the cartoons, and which was one of the reasons that the company got caught between a rock and a hard place.

In order to be able to clarify some issues as I go along, and create a better understanding of the two cultures involved. I have found it necessary to include some essential points from the crisis. This are among others the question of why the ambassadors addressed the Danish Prime Minister directly, instead of addressing the foreign minister? In addition, why the Prime Minister could not hold the newspaper responsible for its actions, and why he did not interfere? These were issues that caused confusion both in a Danish and Middle Eastern point of view.

1.2 Structure, theory and approaches

This thesis is divided into seven parts. Chapter 2, which follows the introduction, takes among others starting point in W. Timothy Coombs theory of crisis management. Too many people think that crisis management means having a crisis management or responding when a crisis hits. However, Coombs uses a three-staged approach to crisis management, pre-crisis, crisis, and post-crisis, which explains how crisis management can prevent or reduce the threat of a crisis. This will help us to understand the way a crisis could be handled. In addition, As Coombs' model does not include an intercultural approach to crisis communication. I will include Simon Ulrik Kragh's decoding model, which aims at defining the codes and encodings of a given context, especially the

intercultural context. Professor, Winni Johansen and Finn Frandsen theory of crisis communication approach, as their model “the rhetorical arena,” resembles Kragh’s.

Chapter 3 will shed the light on Arla’s crisis, and what the company went through, using various articles, and statement from the company etc. In addition, I will be looking at the various reactions in the Middle East before Arla’s ad was published and the Danish reaction after it was published. A natural transition will then be to include the cultural part of the crisis by dealing with essential issues in the cultures involved, in order to get a better understanding of how one should perceive the two cultures.

Chapter 4, marks the transition from the thesis theoretical part of its analytical part. The chapter consists of two parts, where I will be focusing on the two civilisations, the western civilisation with focus on Denmark and the Islamic Ummah, the Middle East. The word Ummah is an Arabic word meaning Community or Nation; it is commonly used to mean either the collective nation of states or the whole Arab world. In the context of Islam, the word Ummah is used to mean the “Community of the believers” and thus the Muslim world. The term also covers the conceptions on which the religion of Islam was founded, which is mainly the reason why I have chosen to use the term throughout this thesis, as it is a broad term in itself. In addition, focus will be on different events that were central during the crisis from the perspective of liberal and Islamic worldview. These have among others to do with free speech and why the parties involved acted as they did during the crisis. As the cultural part, indeed is a very complex one, as it contains many socio-cultural elements, I will include Simon Kragh’s decoding model, to get a better overview, and which makes it easier to explain and understand the context. The events as we will see, certainly highlights the cultural gap in the crisis, and will be compared in chapter 5, where I, in order to cover these chapters theoretically I will among others include Roger Scruton, who draws on some essential differences between the two civilizations. This will also with the help of the previous analysis clarify some essential points that caused confusion, when the crisis was debated in Denmark.

Moving on from this contextual framework, I will in chapter 6 focus specifically on Arla’s communicative behaviour of the ad during the crisis, from an intercultural context, before reaching to the conclusion in chapter 7.

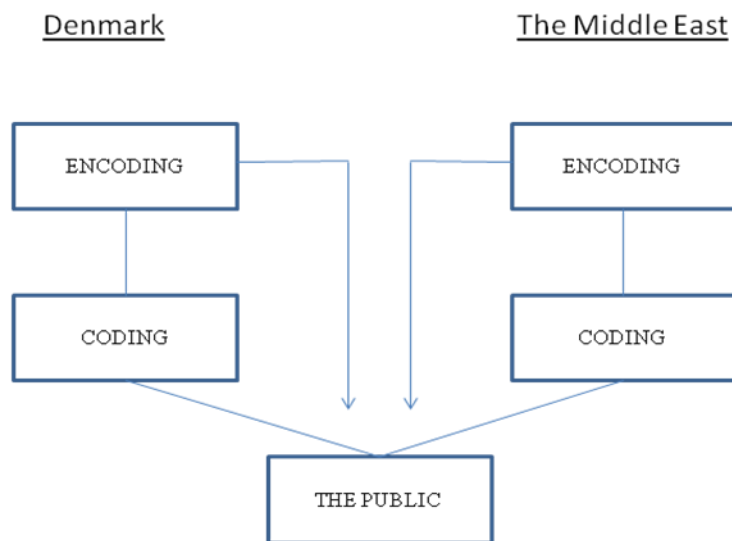
1.3 Source Criticism

Timothy Coombs and his theory of crisis communication as relationship management, compartmentalize research in crisis communication in two different categories, depending on whether there is a focus on the form or content of crisis communication. Research within the first category focuses on what should be done and is described by Coombs as the most basic and primitive research tradition. A perception of crisis management and crisis communication as relationship many believed the involvement of reputation and stakeholder theory. According to this perspective is the relation between an organization and its stakeholder very core of both the strategic and practical public relations work. Crises can, by extension, seen as episodes in the ongoing relationship between an organization and its stakeholder. The relationship between an organization and its stakeholders includes both a structural as a temporal dimension. Regarding the structural dimension, Coombs has been inspired by research in interpersonal communication and defining a relationship as interdependence say. a mutual dependency between two or more persons. The basic idea behind this definition is that people who are related to each other, need each other in some sense. However, his approach alone is not enough, to be able to study the intercultural context, mentioned in the research question, as decoding and different cultural worldviews is very limited or lies implicit in his theory. It is very true, though, as Coombs points out, that handling a crisis from a situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) perspective is important. In addition, when dealing with crisis management in an intercultural context, then it is essentially about the cultural stands the involve parties takes in the certain context. From which they get their message out to their target audience or the public. To be able to depict such interpretations, it requires that one is able to decode what is going on in the socio-cultural context

2. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Crisis management, crisis communication, risk management, and business continuity management are just a few of the many concepts, which are to be found within the field of “the handling of crisis.” Common for these concepts are, that they to a certain extent cover the same phenomenon, and seeks to engage in both how organisations should learn avoiding crisis and what to do when a crisis strikes (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007: 127). In the mid 1980s, research of crises, crisis management, and crisis-communication was initiated. However, the last mentioned field, came in earnest to focus in the mid 1990s (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:65). Moreover, it has not been the tradition within the field of crisis management research and crisis-communication research, to include the intercultural perspective of the field. In contrast, in most cases, the crisis-situation is studied from a perspective that alone consists of the type of crisis itself, and not the parameters of national culture and organisational culture (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:333). Hence, this I will be focusing on, later in this paper. In this chapter, however, I will represent one of the most interesting and fairly newest researchers’ theories within the field of crisis communication. I am referring to the American PR-researcher Timothy Coombs, who regards crisis communication as *relationship management*. His theory is not only relevant for my thesis, but as we will see below, his perception of the concept is very broad, and can be regarded as a development of William Benoit’s responding-model, as it focuses on establishing relationships, image and reputation, organisational legitimacy and attribution-theory, and also the relation between the type of crisis, preparation and responding. Put differently, he regards the way of handling crisis as an ongoing process, which makes it easier for companies to be able to plan better, managing better and responding fairly better.

However, his approach alone is not enough, to be able to study the intercultural context, mentioned in the research question, as decoding and different cultural worldviews is very limited or lies implicit in his theory. It is very true, though, as Coombs points out, that handling a crisis from a situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) perspective is important. In addition, when dealing with crisis management in an intercultural context, then it is essentially about the cultural stands the involve parties takes in the certain context. From which they get their message out to their target audience or the public. To be able to depict such interpretations, it requires that one is able to decode what is going on in the socio-cultural context (Kragh, 1988:29), which the model below devised by Simon Kragh illustrates.



(Kragh, 1988:28)

The model however, will be incorporated when dealing with the cultural analysis of the crisis in chapter 4. This chapter, however, will be used to shed the light on Coomb's theory and his three three-stage model. Hence, it will be applied to answer the first question, of the problem statement in the chapter that follows, where I will be looking at Arla and the cartoons, and answering how Arla experienced the crisis in the Middle East.

2.1 *The field*

The field of crisis communication and management is very dynamic. Researchers have begun to yield additional insight into the crises management process, and the Internet has added the complexity of crises. However, mistakes still plague organisations facing crisis, the emphasis still remains on what is said and done after a crisis. Hence, there is an increased pressure to perform in a crisis, and the field still provides scattered insight. There is no truer statement in crisis management than "*no organisation is immune to a crisis*" which is why all organisations must become prepared for crisis (Coombs, 2007: ix). This might be easier said than done, as surveys find that organisations are slow to see this reality. Too many organisations are complacent with just having a crisis management plan (CMP) without testing it and update their crisis management effort. Too little is done to systematically prepare or even to discover crisis-warning signs. Part of this problem is the nature of writings on crisis management.

Developing a comprehensive crisis management program that captures the ongoing nature of crisis management is not an easy task. The crisis management process is varied and requires the integration of knowledge from such diverse areas as small-group decision-making, media relations, environmental scanning, risk assessment, crisis communication, crisis plan development, evaluation methods and reputation management. A diverse set of crisis management writings must be navigated in order to develop a complete a CMP that covers every stage and sub-stage of the crisis management process. The stages within the process are pre-crisis, crisis event and post-crisis, with each stage being composed of three sub stages. The stages are used to summarise and to organise various insights into the crisis management process. In addition, the field has focused on plans and response, not preparation and prevention. Moreover, the writings about crisis communication and management are fragmented, as people write about crisis from different perspectives. The situation can leave managers struggling to organise bits of information or missing critical resources entirely. Writers often focus on their specialities and fail to make connections to ideas and concepts developed in other specialities. The vast writings about crisis communication and management are a blessing and a curse. It is great to have so much information. However, it is hard to find and organize it all (Coombs, 2007: x). A system that integrates the crisis management writings would benefit practitioners, researchers and educators. Process, is an important word here, as too many people think that crisis management means having a CMP or responding when a crisis hits (Coombs. 2007: xi). Likewise, the field of crisis communication is dominated by case studies and the result is that we know little about how stakeholders react to crises or to the crisis response strategies used to manage crises. Therefore, crisis management needs evidence-based crisis communication guidance for decision-making in a crisis. This must be supported by scientific evidence from empirical research rather than personal preference and unscientific experience (Protecting Organisation Reputations during a Crisis: the development and application of situational crisis communication theory. Corporate Reputation Review, 10 (3) p 163-176).

2.2 Crisis management defined

The term crisis management has evolved from emergency preparedness, and can be understood as a set of factors designed to combat crises and to lessen the actual damage inflicted. Said differently, crisis management seeks to prevent or lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis, and thereby protects the organisation, stakeholders, and industry from harm. Moreover, the area of crisis management

consists of four interrelated factors drawn from the base of emergency preparedness. These are prevention, preparation, response, and revision.

While prevention, also known as mitigation, represents the step taken to avoid crisis. Preparation includes the CMP, and is the best known factor in crisis management. Hence, the CMP is known as the tip of the iceberg. Nevertheless, preparation also involves diagnosing crisis vulnerabilities, selecting and training a crisis management team and spokespersons, creating a crisis portfolio, and refining a crisis communication system (Coombs, 2007: 5)

The third factor, response, is the application of the preparation components to a crisis, which can be simulated, as in an exercise, or real. This factor must be tested regularly, as it will make it much easier for an organisation to respond if the crisis occurs. The testing involves running simulated crises and drills that determine the fitness of the CMP, crisis team members (CMT), spokespersons and communication system. Part of the response factor is recovery, which denotes that the organisation attempts to return to normal operations as soon as possible following a crisis. This is also named *Business continuity* (Coombs, 2007: 6).

Revision, being the last factor, involves the evaluation of the organisation's response in simulated and real crisis determining what it did right and what it did wrong during its crisis management performance. In addition revision is also the development of an institutional or organisation memory, which can improve the effectiveness of crisis management by expanding the organisation's perception of crises and its response capacity. Lastly, revision derives from performance and informs both the prevention and preparation for future crises. To recap, crisis management is a process of preventing, preparing for responding and revising from crises (Coombs, 2007: 6).

2.3 Crisis defined

Millions of definitions are to be found of the concept, crisis, however, common for many of these definitions are that they firstly, consider a crisis as an interruption compared to a normal or wished situation and secondly, as something negative. If we are to mention a classical definition of crisis, Hermann's definition from 1963 could be mentioned. Hermann defined a crisis as follows: "*Crisis, (1) threatens high-priority values of the organisation, (2) presents a restricted amount of time in which a response can be made, and (3) is unexpected or unanticipated by the organisation*" (Coombs, 2007:7)

Despite the many books that have been written about crisis management, there is no one accepted definition of a crisis. Having a specific definition is important because how a subject is defined indicates how it is approached. Coombs has defined the term as follows: “*A crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation’s performance and generate negative outcomes.*” Moreover, he defines a crisis as being perceptual and unpredictable but not unexpected, arguing that wise organisations know that crises will befall them, but they just do not know when, as crisis strike suddenly, giving them an element of surprise or unpredictability. Additionally, Arla was a wise company, as they could predict the outcome of the crisis and took initiatives to prevent it, which will be focused on later in this thesis. Furthermore, crisis can violate expectations that stakeholders hold about how organisations should act and disturb some stakeholder expectations resulting in people becoming upset and angry, this not only threatens the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders, however it is also why crises are considered dangerous to organisation’s reputation. A reputation is how stakeholders perceive the organisation. When expectations are breached stakeholders perceive the organisation less positively, and thereby, the reputation is harmed (Coombs, 2007: 3). Hence, crises have the potential of disrupting or affecting the entire organisation and create negative or undesirable outcomes. Thence, crisis damage extends beyond financial loss. An entire industry can be affected by a crisis in one of its member organisations. Careless handling of an accident can add to the damage (Coombs, 2007: 4). Crisis management is therefore designed to ward off or reduce the threats by providing recommendations for properly handling crisis.

2.4 The three-staged approach

It is quite expatiated to consider the actual sequence of crises as a life cycle, having a start, a centre, and an ending, as any phenomenon, which pass through several stages. Most researchers and practitioners take as their starting point in a simple standard model consisting of three stages, which are pre-crisis, crisis event, and post-crisis. The crisis-event stage is the stage that has had most attention from researchers and practitioners so far, however there is a widespread interest in developing the other two stages (Frandsen and Johansen, 2007: 135).

The idea that crises have an identifiable life cycle is a consistent theme that permeates the crisis management literature. The reason why a crisis manager needs to understand this life cycle is because different phases in the life cycle require different actions. Three influential

approaches emerged from a study of the various crisis management models. Influence was gauged by the number of people citing the approach in the development of their crisis models. These are Steven Fink's (1986) four-stage model, and Ian Mitroff's (1994) five-stage model (Coombs, 2007: 14).

Fink's uses a medical illness metaphor to identify four stages in the crisis life cycle. These are:

- 1) Prodromal, which gives clues or hints of a potential crisis.
- 2) Acute or crisis breakout, that is a triggering event which occurs along with the attendant damage.
- 3) Chronic, referring to the effect of the crisis linger as effort to clean up the crisis progress.
- And finally 4) Resolution, which gives clear signals that the crisis is no longer a concern to stakeholders and that it is over.

Moreover, he divides the crisis event into three stages, arguing that a crisis does not just happen it evolves. It begins with a trigger event (acute phase), moves to extended efforts to deal with the crisis, (chronic phase) and concludes with a clear ending (resolution). As a result, crisis management is enacted in stages and is not one simple action. The acute phase is dominated by the eruption of the crisis (Coombs, 2007: 14). Mitroff, on the other hand, divided crisis management into five phases: 1) Signal detection, indicating that new crisis warning signs should be identified and acted upon to prevent a crisis. 2) Probing and prevention, organisation member search known crisis risk factor and work to reduce their potential for harm. 3) Damage containment, a crisis hits and organisation members try to prevent the crisis damage from spreading into uncontaminated parts of the organisation or its environment. 4) Recovery, where organisation members work to return to normal business operations as soon as possible. 5) Learning, where organisation members review and critique their crisis management effort, and thereby adding to the organisation's memory (Coombs, 2007:15).

Mitroff's stages reflect Fink's crisis life cycle to a larger degree. The difference is the degree to which Mitroff's model emphasizes detection and prevention. While Fink's model implies that crises can be prevented, the Mitroff model actively identifies them, seeking to prevent them. Nevertheless, Mitroff's model emphasizes how the crisis management team can facilitate the recovery while Fink's model simply documents that organizations can recover at varying speeds. Moreover, Fink's model simply notes that the resolution stage occurs when a crisis is no longer a concern. For Fink, termination marks the end of the crisis management function. In contrast, Mitroff's model is cyclical because the end also represents a new beginning. The crisis management effort is reviewed and critiqued in order to find ways to improve the system. In addition to evaluation and retooling, the final stage involves maintaining contact with key stakeholders, monitoring the issues tied to the crisis, and providing updates to the media. While, Mitroff's is active and stresses what crisis

managers should do at each phase. Fink's is more descriptive and stresses that characteristic of each phase. The Mitroff model is therefore, more prescriptive than Fink's. Fink is concerned with mapping how crisis progress, while Mitroff is concerned how crisis management efforts progress. However, Brian Richardson (1994) provided the first detailed discussion of one. His model was composed of the following stages; 1) pre-crisis or pre-disaster phase, where warning signs appear and people try to eliminate the risk; 2) crisis impact or rescue phase, where the crisis hits and support is provided for those involved in it; and 3) recovery or demise phase, where stakeholder confidence is restored. Following from this three-stage approach, Coombs divided the crisis management process into three macro stages: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. Macro, here, means that the stages are general and that each stage contains a number of more specific sub-stages. Within each stage there are separate sub-stages or set of actions that should be covered during that stage. Moreover, each sub-stage integrates of writings about that particular crisis management topic. Each cluster of writings has been carefully examined in order to distil the essential recommendations the clusters could offer to crisis managers. In addition, this three-stage approach provides a unified system for organizing and utilizing the varied insights crisis managers offer (Coombs, 2007: 16-17).

2.4.1 – Pre-crisis

The pre-crisis stage involves three sub-stages: 1) signal detection, 2) prevention, and 3) crisis preparation.

In 1986, crisis management pioneer Steve Fink proclaimed that all crises had warning signs or prodromes, indicating that a situation has the potential to develop into a crisis. The search for warning signs is known as signal detection. The basic element of signal detection is scanning, which is, as the name indicates, an active search for information, and identifies as many warning signs as possible. Signal detection is a three-part process:

Firstly, the sources of information to be scanned must be identified the crisis managers want to search sources that are related to crisis in some way. For instance customer complaints can signal a potential crisis in product quality or customer relations. Secondly, the information must be collected. The crisis managers must decide how the information will be collected from the source. Thirdly, the information must be evaluated for its crisis potential: how strong the warning signs are, how likely the situation is to develop into a crisis. (Coombs, 2007:18)

Prevention is the ideal form of crisis management because the best-managed crisis is the crisis that is prevented. Organisation members should be proactive and take all possible actions to prevent crises. However, not all crises can be prevented, so organization members must also prepare for crises as well. Most crises do emit early warning signs. If early action is taken, these crises can be avoided. In addition, once the potential is detected, actions must be taken to prevent the crisis. Preventative measures fall into three categories: issue management, risk aversion and reputation management. While the first, issue management, means to take steps to prevent a problem from maturing into a crisis. The second, risk aversion, eliminates or lower risk levels. Lastly, reputation management seeks to resolve problems in the stakeholder-organization relationship that could escalate and damage the company's reputation (Coombs, 2007: 22).

There are many ways to prepare for a crisis. However the preparation will vary, as the organisation must determine the character or vulnerability, if you like, of the crisis before it strikes. The preparation phase of crisis management anticipates the occurrence of crises. Diagnosing vulnerabilities assesses the likelihood and impact of potential organisational crises and crisis types are groupings of similar crises. An organisation cannot prepare for all crises but can prepare for the major crises types (Coombs, 2007:22)

To recap, the first step in an ongoing approach to crisis management is to find potential crises before they find your organization. Issue management, risk assessment and reputation management can all contribute to crisis scanning. However, to meet the challenge, crisis managers should know what sources to scan, how to collect information, and how to evaluate information for its crisis potential.

2.4.2 – Crisis event

The crisis event begins with a trigger event that marks the beginning of the crisis. The crisis stage has two sub stages: 1) crisis recognition and 2) crisis containment.

Crisis recognition includes an understanding of how events get labelled and accepted as crises, how to sell a crisis to management, and the means for collecting crisis related information. An actual crisis puts an organisation's crisis preparation to the test. In addition, we deceive ourselves into believing that crises are easy to spot, thinking that all crises are like giant icebergs in the North Atlantic on a clear summer's day, relatively simple to see and to avoid. A situation becomes a crisis when key stakeholders agree it is a crisis. Unfortunately, some members of management may wish to deny that the organisation is in a crisis even when stakeholders are screaming that it exists. It is

here that the word “*selling*” occurs, as the issue for crisis managers becomes how to sell a problem as a crisis to the dominant coalition. This is also known as the crisis frame, which is the way a problem is presented, and the meaning one attaches to the problem. The greater the possible loss or probability of loss, the greater the perceived importance of a crisis. Moreover, the sooner a crisis can produce harm, the greater its immediacy. Lastly, the larger, the amount of ambiguity surrounding a crisis, the greater its uncertainty - eventually include Arla (Coombs, 2007: 103).

The second stage, crisis containment, focuses on the organization’s crisis response, including the importance and content of the initial response communication’s relationship to reputational management, contingency plans, and follow-up concerns (Coombs, 2007: 19).

Once a crisis hits, the crisis team must work to first of all, prevent it from spreading to unaffected areas of the organisation or the environment, and secondly, limit its duration. Communication presents unique challenges during the response phase. Initially, the crisis team must collect and respond information in order to make decisions. Externally, stakeholders must be informed about the crisis and actions must be taken to address it, including reporting the organisation’s progress toward recovery. Said differently, regular two-way communication between the organisation and the stakeholder is the lifeblood of a favourable organisational stakeholder relationship. The dialogue must be maintained during good times and bad. Crises are part of the bad times. Remembering the importance of communicating with stakeholders aids the CMT in its efforts to contain and recover from the crisis (Coombs, 2007: 150)

2.4.3 Post-crisis

A crisis eventually comes to an end. However. The job of crisis managers is far from done, as they must evaluate their efforts and monitoring the crisis after they had come to an end. Organisations learn to improve their crisis management through evaluation. Evaluation is the key to improvement, as it will teach the organisation what it did right or wrong during a crisis. Monitoring might involve cooperating in continuing investigations or supplying necessary updated information to stakeholders. Learning is accomplished through evaluation of the crisis management effort in two distinct ways. First, how the organisation dealt with the crisis, its crisis management performance, is evaluated, examining the efficacy of the CMP and its execution. The crisis team carefully examines all phases of its performance. Second, the crisis impact is evaluated, a review of the actual damage created by the crisis. Moreover, data collection is the first step in any evaluation process. Once collected, the data must be organised for analysis (Coombs, 2007: 152-153). Moreover, the crisis

management performance evaluation should include measures of damage factors that reflect success or failure in protecting these assets. The damage factors include financial, reputational, human, secondary financial, Internet frames, media frames and media coverage duration. Just to mention one of them, the reputational factors involve perceptions of the organisation. Three related elements are relevant to assessing crisis effects on reputation: 1) the pre- and post-crisis reputation scores, 2) media and Internet coverage of the crisis, and 3) stakeholder feedback (Coombs, 2007: 156)

The post-crisis actions can be divided into three groups: follow-up communication, cooperation with investigations and crisis tracking. Follow-up communication is an extension of the crisis recovery phase. In addition, crisis managers should update the stakeholders on the progress and result of ongoing investigations and the actions taken to prevent a repeat of the crisis. Lastly, any crisis must be monitored when it is over, even if no changes are initiated. Crisis tracking monitors the factors that produce the crisis to see if another threat may rise (Coombs, 2007: 162)

To recap, the reason why post-crisis action should be taken is that it firstly, help to make the organization better prepared for the next crisis. Secondly, it assures that stakeholders are left with a positive impression of the organization's crisis management efforts, and lastly, seeks to ensure that the crisis is truly over.

2.5 Conclusion

Crisis management is not a simple collection of various actions relevant only during a training drill or actual crisis. Rather, crisis management is an ongoing process of intricate interwoven steps. Specific knowledge, skills, and traits are associated with effective crisis managers. Selection and training of crisis personnel should seek to maximise those knowledge, skills, and traits. Moreover, crisis management involves the development and maintenance of procedures designed to improve the flow of information and knowledge before, during and after a crisis.

Coombs has expressed that effective crisis management is ongoing, beginning with the call for crisis preparedness as the initial and continuing message delivered by crisis management advocates (2007: 166). It has been found that many major organisations have a crisis management plan. However, too little is done in terms of exercises and crisis team training. Having a CMP, crisis team, crisis portfolio, and crisis communication in place is but one stage in a larger process. Crisis management must not only become a part of an organisation's DNA, however, it must also be viewed as a daily effort, not just as an as-needed concern. Moreover, organisation should routinely test and revise the various elements of crisis preparation. Revision would include updating the

CMP, upgrading or teaching new skills to the crisis management team, reassessing the crisis portfolio and improving the crisis communication system (Coombs, 2007: 166). Because organisation, their personnel, the environment, and technology constantly change, the elements of crisis preparation also must change.

In the following, I will be focusing on how the Cartoon Crisis unfolded, implying Coomb's crisis management theory, in order to describe and analyse how Arla experienced the Cartoon Crisis in the Middle East and which careful consideration underline their approach.

3. ARLA AND THE CARTOON CRISIS

In order to understand why Arla Foods responded the way they did, during the crisis, it is essential to firstly, look upon how the crisis unfolded, and thereby try to get an overall understand or picture if you will of the many codes involved. Thence, I will move on to the Middle Eastern reactions to the cartoons, and which measures the company took, in order to stop the boycott, such as the ad in the Middle Eastern newspapers. Lastly, I will be looking at the Danish reactions to the ad. Despite the various theorists that I refer to, I have, in order to substantiate the various arguments, included my correspondence with Director Group Communication, Astrid Gade Nielsen. However, firstly it is essential to provide the reader with some background information on the company.

3.1 About Arla

Arla Foods is a Swedish Danish co-operative based in Århus, Denmark, and the largest producer of dairy products in Scandinavia. It was formed as the result of a merger between the Swedish dairy co-operative Arla and the Danish dairy company MD Foods, on 17 April 2000. Approximately 7,996 milk producers in Denmark and Sweden own Arla Foods. Denmark, Sweden and the UK are considered home markets as the Group has products in all three countries. The turnover in these three markets accounts for approximately 73 percent of Arla Foods' turnover. Moreover, Arla owns 100 per cent of the UK company Arla Foods UK. In addition to Denmark, Sweden and the UK, Arla Foods operates subsidiaries in 19 export markets. The two companies behind Arla Foods, the Danish MD Foods and the Swedish Arla, are both rooted in the co-operative movement. Hence the companies merged in 1999. However, Arla's sales were seriously affected by a boycott of Danish products in the Middle East in 2006. Transnational anger among Muslims over satirical cartoons of Muhammed was the immediate cause of this. After the Danish government refused to condemn the cartoons or meet with eleven concerned ambassadors from Muslim nations, a boycott was organized, starting in Saudi Arabia and spreading across the Middle East. In addition, the Middle East is Arla's largest market outside Europe, where the company has been established for 40 years (www.arla.com/history).

3.2 The Cartoon Crisis - How it unfolded

A summer evening in June 2005, was an evening that was going to change the history of Denmark rapidly, however, no one at that point was aware of that. It was the evening where the Danish children's book writer Kåre Bluitgen was at a party with old friends from the political left wing in a

villa in mundane Frederiksberg, a suburb of Copenhagen. At the party, Kåre Bluitgen met a journalist from the Danish news bureau, Ritzau, whom he told about the children's book that he was writing about the Prophet Muhammad's life, and expressed the fact that he had problems finding an artist willing to illustrate it. Though he already had asked three illustrators, they had refused for fear of violent reprisals from Islamists ("The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded", 2008, 11 March). A while later the journalist contacted Bluitgen who in meanwhile had found an artist. The artist however, insisted on remaining anonymous out of concern for his safety, as his fears was among other things connected to the murder of Dutch film director, Theo Van Gogh, and to a violent attack on a lecture from Copenhagen University, who had been assaulted after he read aloud to his students from the Koran. Ritzau's telegram was released to the Danish news desk on Friday, 16 September with the headline "*Danish artists fear criticizing Islam*". The article led to an intense debate in the Danish media about self-censorship and the fear of confronting Islam. The chairman for a national authors association warned against limitations on freedom of expression and a Christian newspaper encouraged illustrators to demonstrate civil courage in an editorial, writing, "*Let your pen loose*". In addition, the public debate was discussed at an editorial meeting at daily newspaper Jyllands-Posten, the largest circulation newspaper in Denmark, where a group of journalists discussed the fact of how the matter could be covered. One of the journalists had an idea: "*what if we write to all of the members of illustrators' union and ask if they will draw Muhammad?*" The feelings were mixed, some colleagues felt the idea was an original way to document whether there was a problem with self-censorship or not. Others felt that it would be an unnecessary offence to the religious convictions of Danish Muslims. Meanwhile, the idea was presented to one of the newspaper's editors-in-chief and to cultural editor Flemming Rose. The very same night, Rose wrote to the approximately 40 members of the illustrator's trade association, referred to the previous day's debate and concluded: "*Daily newspaper Jyllands-Posten takes the side of freedom of expression. For that reason, we would like to invite you to draw Muhammad as you see him*". The association had 25 active members, three of whom were the newspaper's own illustrators. Twelve accepted the challenge, each in turn producing a very different interpretation. One of Jyllands-Posten's own illustrators, Kurt Westergaard, quickly focused his thoughts on the fact that the fundamentalist version of Islam fires the spiritual bonfire of suicide bombers, who blow themselves up in the name of Muhammad. He grew up in a fundamental Christian society in the 1940s, and true believing Christians have often gagged on their early morning coffee when they have seen his drawing of Jesus in Jyllands-Posten. He drew the Prophet with a bomb in his turban.

In his mind, the drawing was not directed against Islam in general; it merely targeted the Islamic extremists who have taken their religion hostage in bloody terror actions (“The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded”, 2008, 11 March).

In the following days, the newspaper’s editors learned about other cases of cultural life censoring itself and an unwillingness to confront Islam. The Tate Museum in London removed a work by the artist John Latham out of fear of a Muslim backlash. Moreover, a museum in Gothenburg, Sweden, had done the same thing. The translator of a book by the Dutch-Somalian critic of Islam, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, insisted on remaining anonymous. And a well-known Danish stand-up comedian said in an interview that he was afraid to perform provocative satire about Islam. These above mentioned examples helped solidify the foundations of his project, Flemming Rose felt. Editor-in-chief Carsten Juste was less convinced but chose not to stand in the way, because he found the drawings harmless and totally in line with the Danish tradition for satire. The 12 drawings were printed in Jyllands-Posten’s culture section on 30 September 2005, accompanied by an article by Flemming Rose in which he explained the background of the cartoon series and added: “*Some Muslims reject modern, secular society. They make demands for special treatment when they insist on special consideration for their religious feelings. That stance is irreconcilable with a secular democracy and freedom of expression where you have to be ready to accept insult, mockery, and ridicule. It’s not always pleasant and nice to experience, and that doesn’t mean religious principles should be made fun of at all costs, but those considerations are secondary in this context.*”

Expectations at Jyllands-Posten varied. Some predicted a hefty debate because Islamists in Denmark were about to receive an “*electroshock treatment in democracy.*” Editor Juste and others did not feel the matter would have much significance. Moreover, the immediate reaction was also limited. Several Muslim storeowners refused to sell the newspaper, stating they felt the drawings were a deliberate provocation (The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded, 2008, 11 March). Among the first to react in Denmark to the cartoons was the imam Raed Hlayjel, in the town of Århus. He demanded an apology, saying “*Muslims will never accept this kind of humiliation; the cartoons have insulted every Muslim in the world. We demand an apology.*” Not surprisingly, Jyllands-Posten rejects Hlayjel’s demand for apology, saying; “*Religion shouldn’t set any barriers on that sort of expression.*” Moreover, representatives from Denmark’s Islamic Faith Community also demand an apology from Jyllands-Posten, but were rejected as well. On the 12 October, Jyllands-Posten expresses its regrets in an editorial piece for what it called an unintended offence and editor Juste insisted that he would not apologise for the publication of the cartoons (Ghazi,

2006:78-79). Outside the searchlight of the media, however, an intense discussion ensued in Muslim circles in Denmark. Only a few people had seen the newspaper and a good number of prominent Muslims did not feel it was worth the effort to protest, either because they did not care about the drawings or because they feared that violent protests would give Danish Muslims negative publicity. Other imams, however, strongly disagreed. They felt the offence was so serious that an example had to be made. During the first two weeks, the case was largely ignored by the Danish media. The major breakthrough came at a demonstration at Copenhagen's central Town Hall Square, which gathered about 3000 participants for Muslims' Friday night prayer on 14 October, describing Jyllands-Posten's cartoons as provocative and arrogant ("The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded", 2008, 11 March). Their anguish again fails to draw attention of the newspaper clergy, political leaders of Denmark and the EU, the situation shows the first signs of progressing deterioration (Ghazi, 2006:79). On the 19th October 2005, eleven ambassadors from Muslim countries requested a meeting with Prime Minister Rasmussen to discuss a possible government action on the issue of the cartoons. Beforehand this request they had written a joint letter to take legal action against Jyllands-Posten, and warned that the issue being very serious, "*it can cause reactions in Muslim countries and among Muslim communities in Europe*" (Ghazi, 2006:79). The Egyptian ambassador, Mona Omar Attia, was particularly receptive. She took the initiative to draft a letter to Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, in which the ambassadors lamented the ongoing smear campaign against Islam and Muslims in Denmark. They asked the government to "*take action against the responsible parties based on the law of the country*" and "*to take the necessary steps to avoid defamation of Islam*", and lastly, "*they asked for a prompt meeting due to the case's sensitive nature*". In his reply, Prime Minister Rasmussen explained the principles behind freedom of expression and the blasphemy law in Denmark ("The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded", 2008, 11 March) and refused to meet with the 11 ambassadors on the grounds that the Danish media are governed only by the courts, not the government (Ghazi, 2006:80) and therefore, felt that their demands to take action against the press provided the wrong basis for a discussion. The last mentioned created an intense embitterment among the ambassadors and their governments in the Islamic world ("The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded", 2008, 11 March), as the first sign of rupture in Muslim-West relations almost three weeks after the publication of the cartoons in Denmark, Egyptian officials withdrew from dialogue they have been conducting with their Danish counterparts about human rights and discrimination (Ghazi, 2006:80). Moreover, it was later a point of criticism against the Danish prime minister that he could possibly have avoided the ensuing

conflict if he had listened more to their protests. Others praised Rasmussen for not cowing under “totalitarian regimes” in the Middle East (“The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded”, 2008, 11 March).

In November 2005 after failing to get anybody’s ear in Denmark to listen to their grievances, the Egyptian embassy in Copenhagen entered an alliance the imams who managed the protest in Denmark. The ambassador helped the imams by arranging delegations trips to Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. Here they received an audience with influential politicians and religious leaders as well as prominent media, (“The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded”, 2008, 11 March), to draw attention to the issue and to their failure in persuading the Danish newspaper and the government to rectify the wrong (Ghazi, 2006:81). The imams had a stack of folders, which documented their perceived violation; along with them were also a number of graphic pictures, which apparently were sent anonymous to Danish Muslims showing, the prophet as a paedophilic, horned devil, the prophet wearing a pig’s snout and ears, and lastly the prophet having sexual intercourse with a dog. However, a number of Middle Eastern media did not distinguish between the two categories of pictures. They simply reported that Danish newspapers had represented Prophet Muhammad as a pig. In addition, a great deal of misinformation appeared in the aftermath of the delegation. Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Abdul Gheit also ensured that the controversial folder was distributed at the Organisation of Islamic Conference’s (OIC) summit in Mecca in December, where the drawings were indirectly condemned in a resolution, and where state and government leaders discussed the case busily in corridors. Thereby, the fuse on the explosion, which was to come in January was lit. In Denmark, on the other hand both the government and Jyllands-Posten came under growing pressure. In the first weeks, politicians and opinion makers had been largely in agreement about a flat-out denial of the Muslim demand that Jyllands-Posten should apologise and the government should step in to put the newspaper in its place. A survey in November 2005 also showed that 57 per cent of the Danes felt that it was “right” to print the drawings while 31 per cent felt it was “wrong.” However, the criticism of Jyllands-Posten gradually became more and more confrontational. The newspaper was accused for example; of deliberately targeting and ridiculing Muslims and that, the publication of the drawings was a racist action. A number of left-wing intellectuals had originally defended the newspaper’s right to print the drawings. However, support gradually dissipated as the case was used for political attacks on liberal prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who maintained his position “*that respect for people’s religious beliefs should not lead to a situation in which we place limits on the press’s ability for criticism, humour and satire*” (“The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded”, 2008, 11 March). In his New Year’s address to the

nation, the prime minister emphasised “*the importance of freedom of expression, religious freedom and mutual respect*” (Ghazi. 2006: 85).

In the beginning of January 2006, it appeared, at least from Danish point of view, as if the crisis had just begun. Four days after Denmark’s Regional Public Prosecutor in Viborg finds no basis to prosecute Jyllands-Posten and the days after Rasmussen’s emphasis on religious freedom, and mutual respect, Norway’s evangelic Christian newspaper Magazinet reprints the blasphemous cartoons, obviously with the permission of Jyllands-Posten which holds copyright over the drawings (Ghazi. 2006; 87). The same day, On 10 January, in the holy city of Mecca, they celebrated the Eid al-Adha, which commemorates the end of the annual pilgrimage. Imam Abdul Raham Alsidis had the world’s largest Muslim audience at his disposal during his sermon; two million listened to him in Mecca. Another 100 million could follow along on direct TV transmission on Arabic satellite stations. They heard Abdul Rahman Alsidis’s speech that Islam and the Prophet were under attack in the media. Without naming either Denmark or Jyllands-Posten he encouraged Muslims to give resistance to what he called, “*a deliberate campaign against the Prophet Muhammad.*” Saudi Arabia allowed demonstrations in the country’s media, in the mosques where they were a favourite subject during Friday prayers, and in supermarkets where there was support for a significant ban against Danish products (The cartoon crisis – How it unfolded”, 2008, 11 March). On 20 January in a peaceful protest, Muslim masses began boycotting Danish goods. Superstores from Jeddah and Dubai to Muslim-owned grocery chains in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal in Canada and cities across the US clear shelves of all Danish products. Danish-Swedish dairy giant, Arla Foods, which sells about \$500 million a year in the Persian Gulf region alone, started losing \$1.74 million every day due only to the Gulf boycott. The following day, the International Union of Muslim Scholars, based in Doha, Qatar, and led by renowned 79-year-old Egyptian born Islamic scholar Dr. Yusuf al Qaradawi, announced its support for a consumer goods boycott of Denmark by Muslim public across the world (Ghazi, 2006:88). On 26 January Saudi Arabia recalled its ambassador from Copenhagen and two days later on 28 January anti-cartoons protest started visiting Muslim cities, although demonstration were still free of violence. Moreover, a massive peaceful demonstration besieged the Danish embassy in Kuwait city. However, in the first sign of violence, protesters in Baghdad, Iraq, burned the Danish flag. In addition, Muslim protesting peacefully in Sanaa, Yemen, declare boycott of Danish products. Grocery stores in Egypt remove Danish products from shelves. On 28 January, Jyllands-Posten prints a statement in Arabic saying, that the drawings were published in line with freedom of expression and was not a

campaign against Islam. Hence, Palestinians burn Danish flags and Libya announces, that it will close its embassy in Denmark, and Danes were told to be vigilant in the Middle East (Timeline: The Muhammad cartoons, 2006, February 6). The situation flared up more after Jyllands-Posten editor Juste tried to outwit the world Muslims on 30 January 2006, what some people simplistically still tend to believe was an apology. He said in his open letter headlined “Honourable Fellow Citizens of the Muslim World”: *“Honourable Fellow Citizens of the Muslim World” that the cartoons were not intended to be offensive, nor were they at variance with Danish law, but they have indisputably offended many Muslims for which we apologise.”*

Some people erroneously projected this. In addition, Juste reiterated that his newspaper asked a number of Danish illustrators to submit their own personal interpretations of how the Prophet might appear. Juste also hinted at provocative intentions by admitting that his editorial staffs was well aware that the drawings would anger certain groups and individuals, while stating further in an interview with John Hansen, that *“there were some journalists here at the paper, including some who regularly writes about Muslims immigration, and integration, who strongly advised us not to do it.”* In the same interview, Juste further disclosed; *“a rank and file reporter... came up with the idea. It was circulated; the relevant editors discussed it. They all liked it, so we got started... the idea was to write to 40 illustrators and ask if they would draw Muhammad for publication in Jyllands-Posten.”* Nevertheless, he betrayed himself, since not all editors had liked the idea anyway. What does it show? The idea of a rank and file reporter of the newspaper prevailed over the advice of several experts of the subjects. Moreover, Juste’s statement made it clear that the offending newspaper was not apologetic about the cartoons themselves, but only for what it wanted everyone else to believe as “unintentionally offending” many Muslims, thereby suggesting that there were many other Muslims who did not find the cartoons offensive. Not many westerners accepted this 30 January 2006 statement as an apology, in spite of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. One expert in rhetoric, Christian Kock, said *“Juste’s apology did not constitute a real apology”*. Christian Kock compared with a situation where you left a rake out on a garden path, which hit your neighbour when he trod on it. You apologise that the neighbour hit himself. However, you would not apologise for having left the rake upturned. In an explanatory note in the same interview, Collignon said, *“during the first four months... Juste categorically refused to allow the word apology to pass his lips.”* Within days after publication of the famous apology, Juste told Collignon: *“No. I don’t regret anything and insisted that his newspaper’s position in the Muhammad dispute remains the same as always.”* (Ghazi. 2006:19-20)

The following days, it was obvious that the situation had escalated even more. Saudi hospitals refused to buy Danish insulin. Moreover, newspapers in Germany, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands published one or more of the cartoons. *France Soir* published all 12 and a new cartoon of its own. In addition, the newspaper's French-Egyptian owner fired the editor, and Syria withdrew its ambassador to Denmark. On February the 2nd, Anders Fogh Rasmussen appeared on Al-Arabiya, a Saudi news network, trying to calm the situation, but he was not that lucky. The same day, the Jordanian newspaper *Al-Shihan* printed the drawings, the editor was sacked and ordered to apologise, and prominent people like Peter Mandelson, the EU Trade Commissioner, stated that the boycott must end. Moreover, the International Association of Muslim Scholars called for a “*day of anger*” across the world. 50,000 people protested in Gaza. However, *El Pais*, Spain's leading newspaper, reprinted a drawing which showed the prophet made of words saying: “*I must not draw Muhammad*” The most violent days in the protest came on the 4th, 5th and 6th of February, as mobs in Damascus attacked the Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and French embassies but were beaten off by riot police. In addition, protesters gathered for a second day in London and later in Lebanon, demonstrators set fire to the Danish Embassy in Beirut, overwhelming Lebanese security forces. A protestor dies. Hence, the US and Lebanon blames Syrians for the riot. The Lebanese Interior Minister offers his resignation. Moreover, around 4,000 protest in Afghanistan. Iran withdraws its ambassador from Copenhagen and on 6 February, protesters were killed in Afghanistan as demonstrations take place in Kabul and the city of Mihtarlam. In addition, crowds gather in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, and three cities in Indonesia (Timeline: The Muhammad cartoons, 2006, February 6), and the list goes on. However, one of the most notable issues in this “battle” was the boycott of the Danish-Swedish dairy group Arla Foods, which will be focused on in the following.

3.3 Arla Foods' problem in the first place

As the support for consumer goods boycott by Denmark spread throughout the Islamic world, the Danish-Swedish owned dairy group, Arla Foods, entered the scene on the 20 January 2006. At that point, the dairy group had already a complicated rational history in proportion to one of its primary Danish stakeholder groups, namely the Danish consumers. In Denmark, the rational history had caused a bad reputation because of Arla's interference in a number of cases. Many Danes view Arla as a big and aggressive monopoly company that does not care about anyone and steamrolls its competitors. The case that is being referred to here, is the one with Arla and Hirtshals co-operative

dairy, where Arla was accused of bribing the wholesale supermarket chain, Metro, to remove the co-operative dairy's products from the shelves, the case ended with a settlement in February 2006. However, before Arla got out of that crisis, they suddenly found themselves in a new one (Johansen and Frandsen. 2007: 305-306).

Arla Foods used to be a well-established company in the Middle East since it had been on the market for 40 years. Therefore, it was one of the very big isolated challenges, that had meet Arla conditionally the past few years and for many it was much unexpected. As the first announcement came from Egypt, about stores having put up signs, which proclaimed that, they refused to sell Danish and Norwegian products in protest against the violation of the Prophet, the situation started to worsen. After the Friday prayer and the declaration from Egypt, the bad news started reaching Saudi Arabia and other countries. It was by that time Director of Overseas Division, Finn Hansen, realised, that the international group's business in the Middle East worth billion, was at risk. A crisis meeting at the Arla's headquarter in Viby, near Århus was held on both the 23rd and 24th of January. Attending the meeting were CEO, Peder Tuborgh, Director Group Communication, Astrid Gade Nielsen, Finn Hansen, vice CEO, Andreas Lundby, and Publicity Manager Louis Illum Honoré. Along with the others CEO, Peder Tuborgh, who has many years of work experience in Saudi Arabia, knew what was on stake when religious leaders urged to boycott. Arla's hunch was that the Danish authorities did not respond and the dairy group had to take immediate action. If the boycott got more effective, Arla's products would then be moved from the shelves in 50.000 stores in the Middle East, shelves, which have demanded decades of laboriously work for Arla to get access to. The experience from earlier boycott actions against other food business showed, that Arla's competitors only needed six to eight weeks to capture the empty shelves. If the competitors got that opportunity, Arla would be beaten off to their starting point 40 years ago. Unfortunately, the company could not do much about the situation in the first place, as the Muslim demand was not directed at the company as such, but rather at Jyllands-Posten and the Danish government (Hansen & Hundevadt. 2006: 132). Put differently, we are dealing with what Coombs terms as offer crisis, where a crisis can impact organisations not directly involved in a crisis such as disrupting the supply chain (Coombs. 2007: x). However, maybe they could try to persuade the government to react fast. As a result, the CMP of the crisis meetings was that Arla should try to create as much public focus of the boycott in order to make it clear how serious the problem was and indirectly put pressure on the government. Before Arla went public, the Dairy Group choose to contact some Danish companies, Danfoss, Grundfoss and Novo Nordisk, which were at risk of being boycott as

well, to see if they wanted to be a party to put a focus on the threat. It was by this early stage clear that the entire industry was about to be affected by the boycott. However, all the companies refused, and choose to keep a low profile though out the process, which is why this entire boycott mainly seemed to be a matter of Arla only (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006: 132).

On Wednesday 25th January, the strategy was to be implemented. Andreas Lundby, Arla's vice CEO, outlined the situation in a fax to the president of the Danish Agricultural Council, Per Gæmelke, council and to the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who were going to have a meeting later that day (view enclosure 1). Arla's management did not write it directly, however they found that their letter was a direct request to the prime minister to give an official apology, in order to stop the boycott. At least he was now familiar with the seriousness of the situation (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006: 132-133). What the company attempted at this point, is what Coombs refers to what an organisation should aim at doing when a crisis hit, namely, to prevent the crisis from spreading to unaffected areas of the organisation or the environment and not least limit its duration. However not all crisis can be prevented (Coombs. 2007: 150).

Before the crisis began Arla's turnover of milk, butter, and cheese in the Middle East, was estimated DKK 3 billion a year. Moreover, the Group had additionally planned to build a larger dairy in Saudi Arabia two weeks after the crisis originated an investment worth DKK 250-300 million, which was intended to enlarge the sale. However, the timing was bad, in the previous months the Group had invested a three-figure number in buying the companies, which sold and distributed Arla's products in Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Kuwait. Arla had focused on a market, which was now in danger of crumble away. The following day, Thursday 26 January, the Danes for the first time received the harsh truth of scale of the boycott, which was in rapid development, as Arla had raised the alarm in statement to the press. At that point, the relevant information had been communicated to the Group's stakeholders (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:134).

3.3 The Middle Eastern reactions

The Danish ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Hans Klingenberg, who had just returned from his birthday vacation on 26 January, said; *"We did perceive through the press and e-mails in the region, that there were suggestions from certain groups to boycott Danish goods and we sense an increasing concern among the Danish companies, we corporate with."* However, he did not undertake the responsibility for the scale of the matter being spotted now, *"there is a risk that one*

has underestimated the harm and affront the drawings have caused not just among the Muslim population in Denmark, but among the Muslims in general. We must take the threat seriously,” he said. In addition, you did not have to be Denmark’s ambassador to Saudi Arabia in order to figure that out. While butter and cheese was either removed from the shelves, or supplied with yellow warning tape, so it was, clear to the consumers that the goods were Danish. The same day, Saudi Arabia’s government appointed grand mufti, sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah, whom Vice CEO of Arla mentioned in his letter. Issued a proclamation, where he urged the Danish government to hold the newspaper that had brought these drawings, to account, and force it to apologise, for its horrible crime. *“The newspaper, must be punished be in form of a deterrent, in order for those who have taking part in provoking this project to learn a lesson”* (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:134-135). Contemporary with the cartoon crisis developing into a formal diplomatic crisis, the boycott of Danish products took shape. Arla’s products were removed from more supermarkets in Saudi Arabia, and the company stated that the situation was serious. Day by day, the boycott escalated to the rest of the Gulf region and later to the rest of the Middle East. Other companies were under threat as well. Many internet pages had listed names with the 18th largest companies and pictures of their products. For instance, the dairy Nordex Food got a cancellation of a large order. Moreover, the Poultry Group Danpo, experienced a decline in sales in the region. However, companies like Tulip. Grundfoss, LEGO and Danisco, which were also listed, stated that they had not been impacted by the boycott yet. Other Danish companies, which were listed on the black list preferred to remain silent. Denmark exports yearly for DKK 5.2 billion to the Middle East, hereof DKK 2.2 billion to Saudi Arabia alone. This only count for 1 per cent of Denmark’s total export, therefore if Denmark had experienced an all-encompassing boycott which resulted in the entire Middle East export falling, it would not have effect the entire macroeconomics at all. However, seen from Arla’s perspective that has invested heavily in the region, the boycott had a hard effect on the company; in fact, it was the most affected company by the boycott (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:137).

Before having, the first crisis meeting in January the company had actually taken some initial steps trying to prevent the crisis back in 2005 even though it was not focused on in the media. Director group communication, Astrid Gade Nielsen, confirms that in my corresponding with her on 18 February 2009, saying; *“Arla actually took initial steps to prevent the situation from escalating, as we were met with questions from both business partners and customers in the region. At that point, we explained the situation as well as the debate in Denmark.”* One can argue that Arla went by the book by using Coombs three-stage model, as they were able to detect a possible crisis

and took the initial step to prevent it. *“Prevention is the ideal form of crisis management because the best-managed crisis is the crisis that is prevented. Organisation members should be proactive and take all possible actions to prevent crises. However, not all crises can be prevented, so organization members must also prepare for crises as well (Coombs, 2007: 22).* In addition, this crisis could not be prevented in any way, even though the company took the steps to prevent the problem from escalating, as the anger was not directed against the company as such. It was therefore impossible for the company to have any influence in lowering the risk level as they found themselves in a helpless position where the situation was out of their hands. Lastly, the company’s reputation in the region was damaged, not because of their own actions, but at the expense of others actions, and because of their origin. Put differently, because we are dealing with a company that is up to a point, Danish. It was not until later in the process when the boycott got more effective that Arla was able to appeal to its Arabian consumers and business partners but not in the initial phase. Seen from an intercultural point of view and from an Arabian context, if one has known a business partner for 40 years, it might be an issue of loosing face, if one turns the back on their business partners. However, what must be understood and remembered in this case, is that even though Arla had been on the market for 40 years and was very popular in the region. They were affected by the boycott because they first of all, are a consumer-oriented company, which not only means that their products are visible in the supermarkets but also makes them an easy target (Astrid’s correspondence – enclosure 2.). Moreover, the Arabian customers and business partners choose to apply their moral rights and found that defending the religion as well as the Prophet was the most important thing to do. However, boycotts of products of a so-called enemy nation and sanctions slapped on such a country that fails to obey the mighty are a common phenomenon of today’s political culture. The boycott of the Danish products in the Arab world, particularly in the Gulf region, was essential in compliance with this modern culture (Ghazi. 2006:47). This was not the first Muslim boycott of the products of a western country. Did the boycott affect innocent people in Denmark? Yes it did, in addition, that is always so with boycotts and economic sanction (Ghazi. 2006:48). However, a similar incident that could be mentioned in this case was in 1995, when Danes boycotted French wines in order to put pressure on the French government to stop the nuclear bomb testing in the South Pacific. The word “French” suddenly represented an unacceptable context in the consumer’s minds, namely that it was acceptable to use nuclear weapons. The quality one noticed of the French government suddenly represented everything that was French. As the Danish consumers at that point had no chance, what so ever, to influencing the French government,

they expressed their anger by pouring wine in the streets and boycott the product. The innocent people affected in this case were mainly the French winegrowers. The boycott in the Middle East, could be said to represent something similar. (“French Nuclear Testing, and Consumption of French Wine in Denmark.” Volume 14, number 3, 2002).

Since, the fax didn't have any effect on the prime minister and since Arla couldn't step in and stop the boycott, Peder Tuborgh who had only been employed as CEO for seven months took the initiative to write a personal letter to Anders Fogh Rasmussen (see enclosure 3). From the enclosure, it appears that Arla had, at that point, five days after the effective boycott began, lost assets worth billions of DKK (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:153). Peder Tuborgh got an answer from the Prime Minister, however, not one of the kinds he had expected. It was a brief phone conversation where the Prime Minister did not discuss any details of the letter. Arla's impression of the short conversation was that the letter annoyed him. Therefore, Peder Tuborgh chooses to maintain the pressure on the Prime Minister and made an application to the media, where he stated: *“I urgently plead the government to form a positive dialog with the millions of Muslims who feel insulted by Denmark.”* It was the first time in modern times that one of the business community's highest positioned bosses used the word *“plead”* in public. There had only been one Scandinavian coincidence before that, which was in 2005, where the head of a Swedish electronics company plead hostages live on TV, in order to release his son. However, it was the same feeling and impression, Arla had about the situation, namely that they were held hostage in the cartoon crisis (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:154). Again referring to what Coombs terms as offer crisis. The same day of the plead, requests to the prime minister came from anywhere in society, both from the business community as well as the opposition, their message was; *“the nation is in crisis, we want to see the Prime Minister entering the scene”*. Denmark came under massive international pressure. There was no solution in sight so far. Moreover, it was unpredictable what the coming hours and days would bring. Therefore, there was a need for the Prime Minister taking a step further and show responsiveness. However, it had to be done without being defeating of the fundamental aspects in Danish society that he had emphasised in previous connections. E.g. in his New Year speech, where he mentioned the importance of freedom of expression, religious freedom and mutual respect, and that respect for people's religious beliefs should not lead to a situation in which place limits on the press's ability for criticism, humour and satire. Said differently, there was a mark that he did not want to overstep (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:155).

3.4 The ad in the Middle East

On February the 2nd. The Prime Minister chose to go live on the Arabic news-channel Al-Arabia, which has its registered office in Dubai. The competitor Al Jazeera had also offered the prime minister an interview, however he choose Al Arabia, as the channel offered him an interview in the program called "*Special interviews*" which is intended for civilised conversations with head of stats and other important persons. In this interview, Rasmussen would get the opportunity to explain himself, without the risk of his messages being edited to unrecognisable sizes (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:166). After the interview, he though, that he had gotten the situation in the bag. However, the following day, known as the day of anger, proved that he had not managed to do that, as the situation worsened the following weeks with riots and demonstrations continuing in the Muslim part of the world, which unfortunately also resulted in people dying (Johansen and Frandsen. 2007:270). In the beginning of March, Arla's loss was estimated to DKK 400 million. After implementing all the steps in their CMP, among others, trying to mediate between the parties involved in order to end the boycott. They could no longer afford to wait, and choose therefore to take the situation in their own hands; they simply wanted to regain the Middle Eastern consumer's confidence. Arla had now reached the stage that Andreas Lundby, referred to in the fax to Per Gæmelke, and to the Danish Prime Minister, stating; "***I'm convinced, that nothing will happen, until someone steps forward with a more exact apology. In worst case, we at Arla will be compelled to go a step further with dissociation. That, we do not prefer***" (view enclosure 1). The consumers have since the end of January embargoed the products in protest against the cartoons, and it was now the time for Arla to go a step further with dissociation. In addition, people at Arla had confident that an advertisement in Middle Eastern newspapers would end the boycott. On 18 March 2006. In a direct appeal to Al Qaradawis conference in Bahrain, Arla choose to public a full-page ad in 25 Arabic newspapers (view enclosure 5.). The ad, provide us with background information of the company, that it has been 40 years on the market, and its background as a Danish-Swedish cooperative, owned by farmers. Moreover, the company repeats its distancing from the cartoons, from the Gulf-food trade fair in Dubai a month ago. In addition, Arla emphasises that through its 40 years in the Middle East, they have learned that justice and tolerance are fundamental values of Islam, and the add also ascertain that Arla was not affect by a boycott because of their own action, on that basis the consumers were asked to reconsider their stance towards Arla. Hence, chief of overseas divisions, Finn Hansen, expressed the same day that the company hoped that the

Arabian consumers would reconsider if it was fair to boycott a dairy company which had nothing to do with the cartoons (Arla forsøger et comeback i Mellemøsten. 18 March 2006).

The ad was not met with a conciliatory gesture in Denmark. Some Danes thought that Arla had gone too far as they were accused of wanting to restrict other people's freedom of expression in Denmark in order to sell their products in the Middle East. However, seen from a crisis management perspective, Arla did the right thing, as they chose to focus on the primary stakeholder group, in this case the Arabic consumers and the 300 religious Muslim leaders attending the conference in Bahrain, which had the significant impact on the company, the target audience of the advertisement was therefore not the Danish population. Moreover, the company reputation was at stake as well and they knew that the relationship between an organisation and its stakeholders is the crux in both the strategic and practical public relations work, or as Coombs puts it; *a reputation is built through the direct and indirect experiences stakeholders have with the organisation. Positive interactions and information about the organisation build favourable reputations while unpleasant interactions and negative information lead to unfavourable reputations. A crisis poses a threat to reputational assets. As greater emphasis is placed on reputation, a corresponding emphasis must be placed on crisis management as a means of protecting reputational assets* (Coombs. 2007:8). In addition, the ad's purpose was to ingratiate with the target audience. That is a communicative strategy to obtain the target audience acceptance, by showing that one behaves according to rules in the normative institutional surroundings which will be the primary impression management strategy in an organization's external communication when an organization's legitimacy or surviving if you will is questioned (Johansen & Frandsen: 2007:233). It is by that code Arla operated, however it was decoded differently from a Danish strategy. In addition, it was with this code Arla came into the warm among religious clerics and thereby the Arabian consumers.

Arla got special treatment at the conference, as a direct result of the disputed ad in the 25 newspapers, the weekend before the conference. The ad procured the Danish-Swedish owned dairy group its own item 19 at the conference's concluding certificate, which sounded as follows; *"the conference appreciate Arla Foods' position, which has declares its objections against the drawings and reject the grounds on which they were published. The conference is by the perception that it was a good underlying basis in order to get a dialog with the company with a view to reach a common understanding."* Hence, Arla obtained what it wanted: a religious recognition of its product now deserved to come back on the shelves in the Middle Eastern stores. The two persons representing Arla at the conference propounded their argument as follows: *"we had nothing to do*

with the drawings. We have dissociated ourselves from them and the boycott affects us, the innocents.” The result was perfect. Arla obtained a new and improved certificate signed by the influential imam from Qatar. In the end of March 2006, their products were back on the shelves in some Middle Eastern stores and supermarkets. Moreover, a number of newspapers in the region wrote that the boycott of Arla Foods’ butter and cheese has been abolished, and that religious leaders urge the consumers to stop the boycott, also other Danish company’ products were put back on the shelves. Before the boycott, 50.000 stores and supermarkets sold Arla’s products (Hansen and Hundevadt, 2006: 222-223). However, in the beginning of April, Arla could state that the consumers were positive towards the products. On the other hand, they also knew that there were still some consumers who were sceptical towards the company and its products, which was why the company choose to forward thinking a marketing campaign in order to ensure the company’s future in the region. Among other things, Arla choose to sponsor humanitarian projects, and helping disabled children, cancer patients as well as the poor and starving people in the region. Moreover, they decided to support activities that create more understanding between the world’s religions and cultures. *“We wish to back the initiative and prove that different cultures are able to live side by, otherwise it would be difficult for us to act as a global company”*, Finn Hansen, said (*“Arla forventer snarligt comeback i Saudi Arabien”*. 5 April 2006). The following day Arla announced that they had decided to sponsor an international conference, which had the purpose of creating a better understanding and appreciation of the world’s religions and cultures. *“Only through a better common understanding and respect between religions and cultures, we are able to avoid misunderstanding and thereby hopefully avoid episodes which prompt hate and violence”* (Arla enters 3000 shops in the Mid. East, 6 April 2006). This was the company’s active marketing campaign, however, the big question that everyone waiting for was whether the consumers would buy the products or not, now that they were put back on the shelves. While Arla was held out in the cold, more local and international competitors had entered the market and won the shelves where Arla’s products used to be. This not only put the company in an increased competition, but it also put an enormous communication task ahead of them, as they had to convince the consumers to buy their products. In order to communicate the message, the company reprinted the declaration from a number of religious leaders, who had urged the consumers to stop boycotting in a number of Arabic newspapers. Moreover, the active marketing plan also contained some CSR-activities as mentioned previously, namely supporting humanitarian activities. Thereby, the company ensured that these initiatives were in the line with the initiatives that they have on their domestic markets in Denmark,

Sweden and the UK, where they during a longer period have supported such causes (Arla soon expect comeback in the Saudi Arabia 5 April 2006). The company's offensive strategy where the vital breakthrough was the advertisement lifted the boycott in the Middle East. Today, Arla has been able to rebuild the good relations they had to their business partners; however, the consumers are divided into two groups, where some are willing to buy Danish goods and some are not. Therefore, the expected sale for 2009 is about 70 per cent of the quantity of what was sold in 2005. *"So we are on track, though with lower expectations prior to the cartoon crisis"* (Astrid's correspondence – enclosure 2). While the ad was well received in the Middle East, it, in the meantime, provoked a damage of the company's credibility in Denmark, as we will see in the following

3.5 The Danish reactions

In the Middle East, Arla managed to some extent to win the hearts of the consumers, however in Denmark the situation was different. According to a 2007 BNY rating, which rates the image of Danish companies, Arla was rated as one of the least credible companies in Denmark, only outdone by DSB, Accenture, and Arriva. In addition how could it get so far? What went wrong? Analyst believed that their strategy during the crisis was wrong, because they were too offensive and too political, which resulted in the company speaking in two tongues, the Arab consumers was told one thing and the Danish public was told another thing. They probably regained the lost image with their advertisement in the Arab part of the world; however, the price they paid was that they lost the Danes credibility and not least the politicians. They were accused of taking the sides of the Muslims and going against the Danish principles of freedom of expression (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2007: 223). Remaining was picture of an unreliable company, where its chase for profit was the only guiding principle in a globalised world, they tried to be friends with anybody (Græd aldrig over spildt mælk.17. April 2007. p.1.). In addition, what Arla assured in order to not being accused of speaking in two tongues was to get the same message through both in the Middle East as well as in Denmark, it was the translation of the ad that led Danes believe that they were speaking in two tongues (Correspondence with Astrid – enclosure 2). In addition, the Danish reactions to the ad were mixed. A number of angry Danish consumers wrote or called Arla during the day of the publication, and made their opinion known. Hence, many were surprised of the way the company addressed the target audience and the chosen language tone. In order for the company to cope with this dissatisfaction of the Danish consumers they choose to open a forum on the internet, they called

“Arla blog,” where they received and answered the complaints. Below is an extract from the blog (“Kritik fra forbrugere af annonce” 22 March 2006):

Question: *“What does Arla mean by saying; we understand and respect your (the Muslims) reaction, leading to the boycott of our products as a result of the irresponsible and unfortunate incident?”*

Reply: *“We have been established at the market for 40 years, and therefore we know the Muslims, their culture, and their religion very well, which is why we are able to understand that they are expressing their anger, by for instance boycotting our products.”*

Question; *“Does that mean that Arla also appreciate the burning of flags and embassies?”*

Reply: *“No, we completely dissociate our self from that. What we appreciate however, is that in time of frustration they take peaceful methods into use, through for instance a boycott. In reality it is every consumer’s right to choose which products they want to buy and which they don’t. The consumers we communicate with and understand are those who represent the majority of the insulted Muslim population, and comprise the common consumer who makes a decision every day when standing in the supermarket.”*

Question: *“But is that not just a way of saying that it is okay to boycott Arla?”*

Reply; *“No, what we are saying is that we appreciate their direct reaction, however, we are now asking them to reconsider if the boycott is fair, using the advertisement, as we inform them that we had nothing to do with the cartoons and that we dissociate ourselves from them”*

Question: *“Why is it necessary to underline that justice and tolerance are fundamental values of Islam?”*

Reply: *“Through our corporation and trade with the Muslim populations we have experienced that the common Muslim perceive the religion in that way. Which is why we ask them to reconsider if the boycott is fair or not, when seen through the light of innocent people who had nothing to do with the cartoons being affected?”*

Question: *“Why is it necessary to sound so humble in the text?”*

Reply: *“the Arabic language is far more polite and official than the Danish language. That is why we for instance use expressions like, honoured citizens, which sounds ancient from a Danish point of view. In Germany you say “Sie” in respect to people you do not know, which will also sound ancient in Denmark. In that, way there is difference between languages.*

First, what everyone seemed to have forgotten was that the advertisement was not directed at the Danes, but at the Arab consumers. Secondly, the company’s errand was to gain consensus between Arla and the Arabian consumers, which is why one is able to find a very evident recipient awareness in the advertisement where the company showed a distinct empathy for the Arab and their reactions to the cartoons. On one hand they had their national culture to relate to, which among other things, implies freedom of expression and freedom of religion. On the other hand, we are dealing with a company, which had to protect their own interests (Græd aldrig over spildt mælk, 17 April 2007 p. 5).

Not to forget, when dealing with different impression management strategies in proportion to different stakeholders, it is more likely, that an organisation choose ingratiating or apology as a strategy, when there is being dealt with a stakeholder group with great power (Johansen & Frandsen. 2007:233)

3.6 Arla vs. the rest

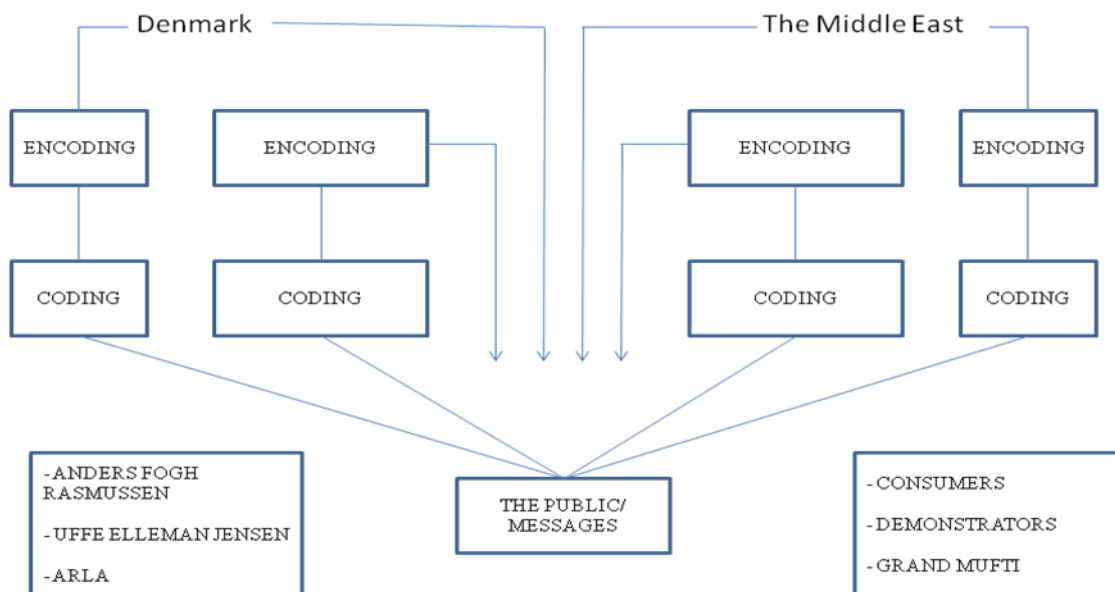
Arla’s cartoon crisis demonstrates the importance of companies being credible to their consumers and other stakeholders who are used to advertisement and media and therefore quickly picks up what is authentic and what is not. The cartoon crisis gave rise to a very important acknowledgement, namely, that globalisation from a company perspective is not only about finance and about utilisation of markets, but it is also about culture and being able to cope in an intercultural context, and of course, the handling of cultural differences. Globalisation is a dilemma where one cannot always be friend with everybody. However, it must be remembered that we live in a smaller and more transparent world, which means that we have closer interaction and interconnectedness with the rest of the world, which is why good relations is an asset to oneself and one’s company for that matter.

In the following, I will focus on the intercultural approach to the thesis. Using Kragh’s model I will aim at getting a deeper insight into the intercultural crisis communication challenges, which met

Arla in respectively Denmark and the Middle East. Put differently, there will be focus on the codes and decodes of the different incidents taking place in respectively the two world orders.

4. ANALYSIS - TWO DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS

As indicated above, we have now reached the part where I will go deeper into analysing the intercultural crisis communication challenges that met Arla in respectively the two very different civilisations. As stated earlier, the cartoon crisis is a very complex one, involving many elements, especially from the company's perspective. However, before I am able to into dept explaining, the crisis communication challenges, the company met, it necessary to look at the two worldviews, in order to understand the mentality of the people involved, and to get a better understanding of why we experienced certain reactions, both in Denmark and the Middle East. Put differently, this chapter aims at getting a deeper insight in Arla's problem-orientation seen from a crisis communication perspective and at bridge the gap between the cultures involved. However, to create a better overview of the many participants and ideologies involved on both sides, and how they are coded and decoded, I will use, part-time associate professor at CBS, Simon Kragh's decoding model or a rhetorical arena if you will:



To analyze a mental conception, it is necessary to formulate it in a sign system, so it is accessible to others. We cannot content ourselves with an implicit knowledge of this relationship, and otherwise ignore it. It must be explicitly in the theoretical apparatus, that portrayals of the company are available only through an external medium. Therefore, concepts such as image, personality, beliefs, etc. are understood as statements and texts. At the bottom is a pool of messages, intended as well as

unintended, and verbal as well as non-verbal. Moreover, it consists among other things of public statements and texts about the company, from the messages that are left out from the company's operations and activities and also the company's statements and texts about themselves. This complex of communications on the company of very different nature now subjected to a decoding, fully consistent with the traditional communication model. Before decoding takes place the communication channel may have distorted the message so that the decoded message is not representative of the pool. However, it is primarily the codes, which are central in the model, since they explicate the possibility that there is a difference between the company and the public code. If there is a difference between the two codes, the same messages will be interpreted differently. In other words, if the company's intended meaning is not matched by public understanding of the message, i.e. there is a misunderstanding. Moreover, the code's function is to act as a filter that only allows some messages to go through, and as a structuring principle, which arranges the messages in a semantic structure. In addition, the codes serve not only as instruments for decoding, but also to encoding of statements and texts. After the texts have been produced, they become part of the total pool of messages about the company, and can now be decoded by respectively the company and the public. In this case, the public will collect the pool of messages and decode it in accordance with its own code, which can also result in a text about the incident. If the company and public codes are equivalent, you will be able to emit the same basic view of the two texts. However, if they are different, the texts fundamental values also differ. Hence, the model can be used to explain the communication gap between the parties involved. Additionally, the explanation of the communication gap is based on the fact, that it is easier to decode a message programmed by the same code as it is used for decoding (Kragh, 1988:28.30).

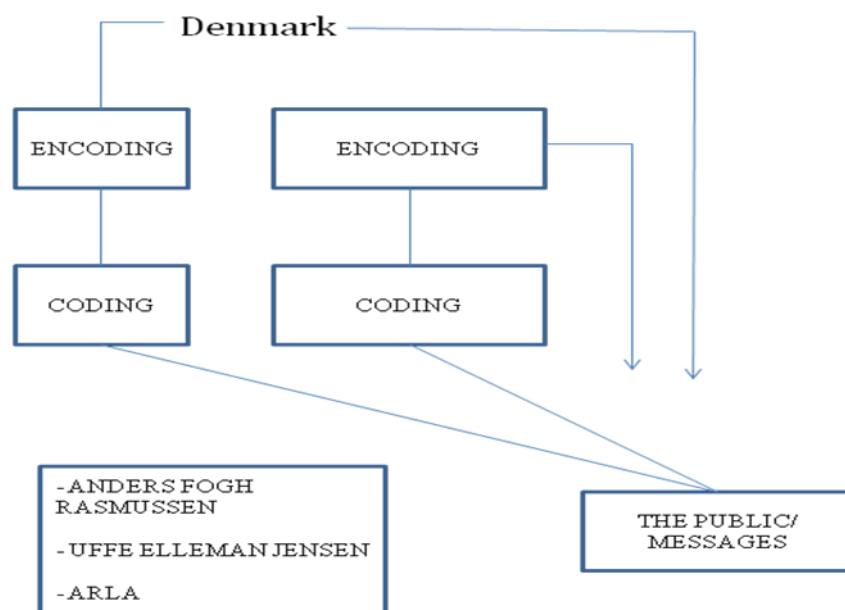
When a crisis arise, i.e. an event, a situation or a course of events is being interpreted as a crisis by respectively the company or the stakeholders, a decoding model or rhetorical arena is a possibility. Here the involved parties act and communicate within the arena. Every time their actions, decisions, and ideological beliefs are regarded, either by themselves or by other participants, as a "contribution" it will be analysed through coding and decoding within the model (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:275). In addition, Kragh's model resembles in many ways Johansen and Frandsen's model of the rhetorical arena, which is why I will be drawing parallels between these, supporting Kragh's model with theories from Johansen and Frandsen. Hence, the representation deals with specific features that was in evidence during the Cartoon Crisis, respectively in Denmark and the Middle East, and aims at explaining why we experienced

diametrical differences within the two worldviews. Having said that, the representation also seeks at shedding the light on cultural differences, and thereby bridge the gap between the cultures involved. Therefore, I have included some of the most influential parties on both sides involved in the intercultural crisis. On the Danish side, I will be dealing with Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen's statements and approaches to the crisis, which belongs to the liberal ideology. As opposed to him, there are those who belong to the more conservative way of thinking, among other, former Foreign Minister, Uffe Ellemann Jensen, and Arla. On the Middle Eastern side, we have respectively the consumers, the angry demonstrators and the grand mufti, who in general represents the same world-view, though shows it in various ways. Hence, in a multi-vocal communication context, there are participants who communicate with one another, as in the case when Arla appealed to the religious leaders at the conference in the Middle East. Moreover, participants, who communicate against each other, and are in conflict with each other e.g. the angry Danish consumers who wrote to Arla and made their opinion known about the ad. In addition, we have the participants, who communicate past each other, such as Arla, the Danish government, and Jyllands-Posten, where Arla fought a losing battle, as both participants did not listen to the company. Finally, we are dealing with a group of participants who communicate about each other, e.g. the press, the consumers, and the citizens, however I will come back to that when analysing Arla's handling of the intercultural gap, having their ad in focus. The purpose of this chapter is to answer the third question of the problem statement, namely, *which cultural codes Arla was trapped in during the crisis?* Therefore, I have found it necessary to shed the light on respectively, the Western civilisation with focus on Denmark, and the Middle Eastern civilisation. Within these two world orders, I will be focusing on the essential points of the intercultural crisis. These have to do with freedom of speech, the demonstrations, why the crisis occurred, Rasmussen's stubbornness, as well as the opposition's point of view, or people who could relate to the fact that Muslims felt violated. In addition, with the help of the kragh's decoding model, it will be easier to illustrate how the points are perceived in the two socio-cultural orders. This analysis will result in a comparison of the two cultures that will indicate the cultural codes Arla suddenly faced during the crisis.

4.1 The Western civilization – focus on Denmark

Who pulled the strings? Could the Danish government have prevented the crisis? In addition, could it get that far, that apparently some banal cartoons got angry Muslims to boycott Danish butter and cheese, run amok in the streets, burn flags, and embassies and kill each other? (Hansen and

Hundevadt. 2006:8). The core element of this chapter is to look upon how Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, handled the cartoon crisis and which dilemma he and the government faced from among others politicians, ambassadors and the business community. Because there are many elements included, I have divide the process into three stages, in order to get a better overview, insight, and understanding of what takes place. In addition, it is essential in this chapter, to include Kant's and Burke's Enlightenment theory, in order to try to understand the different views that is being expressed, in the different scenarios, within the Danish society. Finally, I will raise the question of whether the cartoons were freedom of speech or ideological self-gratification.



4.1.1 The first stage - Rasmussen's strong liberal viewpoint.

Time after time, Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and his government were requested to take actions against the newspaper, by Muslim communities in Denmark. In His reply to a journalist from the daily newspaper Politiken, he said, *“on the whole I dissociate myself very trenchant from what is being said in the certain Muslim circles in a very threatening way. We have extensive freedom of speech, which is not to be limited as people starts using self-censorship for the fear of reprisal. In a free society, there is a stream of what some would refer to as provocations. To put it bluntly, I sometimes feel provoked. There are people, who constantly question authorities critically, including religious authorities. Christianity has to tolerate that and Islam has to tolerate that as well,”* Anders Fogh Rasmussen said, in his first comment to the Cartoon Crisis and specified that

freedom of speech also included admission to draw religious themes (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:42). In addition, in his first big interview regarding the cartoons, Anders Fogh Rasmussen did not leave any doubt that, to him, it was his lifeblood to stick to the Danish core values. *“One of the reasons why our society has experienced such tremendous progress not only in the last century, but for several centuries, is that there have been people who have had the courage to provoke (...). It is absolutely fundamental that of enlightened free society comes longer than unenlightened and illiberal societies, precisely because few dare to provoke and criticize authorities, whether it is political or religious authorities,”* he said to Jyllands-Posten and stressed that it is fundamentally in a free democracy, that freedom of expression and freedom of the press is beyond religion. *“I will never accept that respect for people’s religious beliefs, should lead to that obstruct the press opportunities for criticism, humour and satire (...) whatever the motive was, Jyllands-Posten initiated a very important debate on freedom of expression by bringing these drawings”*(Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:72). Looking at these statements from a crisis communication perspective, it is worth noticing that the rational damage had already happened, as the Prime Minister and the Muslim community very early on in the process talks at cross-purposes, like the decoding model suggest. Hence, analysing this situation from the decoding model, Rasmussen is regarded as a code, who, has a personal opinion of the cartoons issues. The public is decoding this code, and their opinion of it, opens up new codes and encoding. Moreover, he indicates, that he, perceive the Muslim societies as being underdeveloped, compared to the fact that they could not understand or accept how a modern society and democracy, as Denmark operates (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:230). In addition, one could argue that fuel is added to the fire, and his rejection of meeting with the ambassadors as we will see below, does not calm the situation, on the contrary. Put differently, he interprets and provides the public with different codes that are accompanied by his ideological view of liberalism.

On the 12 October 2005, two days before the big demonstration in the town hall square, the Prime Minister, got a first indication of what was expected of him by Muslims. Eleven ambassadors from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Indonesia, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Libya, along with the Moroccan chargé d’affaires and the leader of the Palestine delegation, sent a letter to the Danish Prime Minister’s Office that had been circulated for approval in their home countries. In it, they requested a meeting and described their concerns (view enclosure 3). As can be seen, the letter was not only about the cartoons, but also about the way Muslims in general were being treated in Denmark. They wanted to talk about what they saw as a smear campaign against

Islam and Muslims. The cartoons became the issue later on. The Prime minister's Office, though, interpreted the conflict not as a political issue but as a legal one, and the expectations of political intervention came as a surprise. Rasmussen thought the request was very unusual and asked the Foreign Ministry and his own staff to draft a letter to the ambassadors. Moreover, what he and his staff found especially odd in the letter from the ambassadors was that they wrote that Prime Minister Rasmussen *"should take those responsible to task under law"* (Sløk, 2009:236). He replied in a letter, explaining that the concept of freedom of speech is the actual foundation of the Danish democracy and range far: *"the Danish government has no influence on what the press publishes. However, the Danish legislation prohibits blasphemous or discriminating actions or utterances. The party who feels wronged can present such actions or utterances to the court, which will reach a decision in individual cases."* Nevertheless, He declared himself then agreed on, that *"dialogue between cultures and religions should be based on mutual respect and understanding"*, he finally told in broad terms about the Danish effort to strengthen the dialogue between Denmark and the Muslim part of the world. However, he did not mention anything about wanting a meeting (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:63). Especially the part with the Danish government having no influence on what the press publishes came to be a statement, which he repeated many times during the first stage. In order to stave off the expectation of him reacting in the crisis as a political leader, the Prime Minister invoked a distinction between politics and law, and explained that the law forbids him from interfering on behalf of the Muslim audience who may have taken offence at the cartoons (Sløk. 2009:237). In this case, he fails to encode the essential points of the letter, namely that the ambassadors wanted to talk about what they saw as a smear campaign against Islam and Muslims, and focused the very unusual thing in Danish context, namely that the ambassadors addressed him instead of addressing the foreign minister. In addition, the ambassadors decoded the way the Danish society functions from their own worldview, as the population in the Middle East are used to the prime minister, king, or head of state interferes in everything and often has the last word.

4.1.2 The second stage: the boycott and the riots

Rasmussen's insistence of the distinction between politics and religion could be understood as him not listening to cultural communities in order to maintain power. Moreover, the ambassadors said they were very surprised by this answer, since, all they wanted was a meeting with the Prime Minister on the broader issue, namely the general treatment of Muslims in Denmark. The Muslim

audience, by contrast, is accustomed to political leaders' engagement in all kind of issues, including religious ones, and to them it was incomprehensible that the Prime minister could not react at all. They took him to be saying that he would not act on their behalf (Sløk.2009:237). One possible explanation for the Danish response to the Cartoon Crisis is that Protestant values are as fundamentally rooted in both Danish cultures as Islamic values are in Muslim communities, but of course, with a completely different construal of the relationship between religion and politics. The distinction between religion and politics that Rasmussen was steadfastly holding to simply represents the general protestant view in Denmark on this particular issue. According to a long political and religious tradition, religion and politics should be clearly separate. Moreover, Danes view religion as something private, something outside the public sphere, and separate from ordinary social life (Sløk. 2009:235).

Criticism of Anders Fogh Rasmussen for being arrogant in rejecting this dialogue grew even more forceful as he, on 18 December 2005, at Marienborg, smilingly received the Dutch Member of Parliament Hisri Ali, the previous year's recipient of Venstre's freedom award. Hirsi Ali had come to Denmark to launch a book critical of Islam, and was known as the author of the manuscript for *Submission*, a controversial film directed by Theo Van Gogh, who had been killed by an Islamist because his film had been considered blasphemous. Rasmussen was criticised for his willingness to meet with a controversial critic of Islam while refusing to meet with eleven concerned ambassadors, something which critics saw as proof that the cartoon matter was in fact not about freedom of speech. Rather it constituted a campaign against Islam (DIIS Report. 2008:17). Hence, the public, among others, 22 former Danish ambassadors, encoded his unwillingness of meeting with the Muslims ambassadors as very offending. In addition, the ambassadors said it was "not right" to reject a meeting with Muslim ambassadors, especially in the light of the generally positive reception of Denmark abroad. They referred specifically to the courage of Danes in helping the Jews during the Second World War. Such a statement is very unusual in a Danish diplomatic settings, where the diplomats are obliged to follow the government's political line (Sløk. 2009:236)

As a result, of this lack of comprehension, the second stage of the crisis started as a boycott of Danish products at the annual Eid al Adha, a Muslim holiday where 2 million pilgrims were present in Mecca. The official boycott started on 22 January 2006. Danish economic prosperity was now at stake, with the dairy producer Arla, the most affected company by the boycott. Moreover, the boycott made the Confederation of Danish Industries (DI) react by requesting the Prime Minister to handle the situation more appropriately in relation to vital Danish financial interest. To

the DI, it was not necessary in the first place to publish the drawings. Thus, the bulk of the blame was put on Jyllands-Posten, but Rasmussen's reaction was also criticised. On the 28 January 2006, Hans Skov Christensen, the administrative director of DI, wrote in an open letter to Jyllands-Posten. *I'm asking for a clear stance to the obvious consequences of people taking offence, and that this now is a burden to third parties that are not involved in the case,*" he said. We are now back what Coombs terms as offer-crisis. DI wanted Jyllands-Posten to understand that the priority of freedom of expression over the consumers' value had invoked certain economic consequences. Hence, the confederation also wanted Rasmussen to engage in the conflict as a political leader, and so he did, through still with some resistance (Sløk. 2009:237-238). His liberal stubbornness came in the way, and it was not until the boycott that the complexity of the situation became clear to the Prime Minister, who now had to change his approach to the relationship between religion and politics (Sløk. 2009:237). However, as the Prime Minister's distinction between law and politics had not worked. He had to be more forthcoming, while still maintaining his fundamental view that as a political leader, he was not responsible for solving the conflict. In an attempt to meet the expectation of religious groups without granting that this was a political issue, he introduced in his press statement on 31 January 2006, a distinction between Anders Fogh Rasmussen as a private person, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen as the Prime Minister of Denmark. Through the former, he wanted to be perceived as compassionate and understanding about the offence taken by Muslims. While he through the later, wanted to maintain his distance from the conflict. Using this strategy, he could express his empathy with the Muslim sentiments, while differentiating himself as a political leader, expressing regret at the behaviour of the media and the limits of the law. In his view, which he himself suggested is representative of the general view of Danish culture, religion is something private, and the expectation on him to react as a political leader is therefore inappropriate (Sløk. 2009:238). Moreover, this distinction marked a new stage in the strategy followed in his handling of the situation. A strategy, which he also used in the interview broadcast on Al-Arbiya on 2nd February 2006, and, was intended to be the style for the Prime Minister to express what he believed without taking any official action. He maintains though, that he cannot say what he thinks as a political leader about Jyllands-Posten's publication of the cartoons. However, the strategy did not help to solve the dispute, as a new situation was developing in the form of huge demonstrations, the burning down of embassies and flags, and, violence all over the Middle East (Sløk. 2009:239).

The Prime Minister now had to act, in a new way. Along with his Foreign Minister, Per Stig Møller, they decided to invite all the ambassadors in Denmark to a meeting. Here the value of

freedom of expression was still emphasised, but not as strongly as before. Rather the emphasis was on tolerance and respect and Rasmussen was now talking about the necessity of combining freedom of expression with freedom of religion and respect between religion and cultures. Rasmussen was expressing the willingness to be forthcoming towards the Muslims that had not been seen as directly in the former statements, while still saying that it was impossible for him to interfere with the freedom of expression. In addition, the Foreign Minister, Per Stig Møller, had made a tape in both English and Arabic in which he regretted that *“so many Muslims had been hurt by the cartoons”*, and the tape was sent to several TV stations in the Middle East. A delegation consisting of the Foreign Minister and a Danish bishop, was sent to meet, among others, the Syrian Grand Mufti, a Meeting was arranged by the chairman of the EU, Ursula Plasnik, and Javier Solana. All this apparently had a calming effect on the conflict, and contributed to ending riots in the first Cartoon Crisis. However, the riots and boycotts were revitalized in March 2008 (Sløk. 2009:240).

4.1.3. The third stage: The Prime Minister’s approach to religion after the crisis had calmed down.

The cooling of the conflict in May 2006 initiated a third new stage, in which the Prime Minister took action on the crisis in relation to the national reception of the whole affair. On 20 May 2006, Rasmussen published an article in Politiken, a major Danish morning paper, in which he presented a modern Protestant understanding of the difference between religion and politics. That means the Prime Minister is using theological terms to emphasize his viewpoint; he is turning to his initial distinction and the semantics involved. *“Until now, religion has been on the excluded side of politics, which has been the operative side. Religion and politics have nothing to do with each other,”* the Prime Minister said, and as a political leader, he had nothing to say in relation to religion. No matter how much he was expected to do so by Muslim ambassadors, Danish ambassadors, foreign politicians, foreign Muslim medias and the Confederation of Danish Industries to engage in the Matter (Sløk. 2009: 240-241).

4.1.4 The Cartoon Controversy and aspects of the Enlightenment.

Of the dividing lines in the Danish public debate about the cartoons, the one drawn between standing firm on Enlightenment values versus giving in to the demand for respect for religious feelings is of particular interest from the perspective of political theory. This way of framing the debate was widespread among those who defended the publication of the cartoons. On the same day the cartoons were published, the editorial of Jyllands-Posten criticized the political correct fear of offending Muslims who have a worldview as in *"the dark middle ages...a worldview we in the western world would left during the Enlightenment."* The language of standing firm versus giving in was most prominently used by Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. One of the actions that led to the escalation of the crisis was his refusal in October 2005 to meet with a group of diplomats from Muslim countries who had complained about the negative portrayal of Islam in the Danish public sphere. Rasmussen told the press; *"This is a matter of principles. I will not meet with them because it is so crystal clear which principles the Danish democracy is built upon that there is no reason to do so"* (Rostbøll. 2009:625)

Looking back at the crisis a year later Rasmussen explained; *"the Enlightenment...has been the driving force behind European development and decisive for why we have come as far, as we have. Therefore we have something here, i.e. freedom of expression, with regard to which we cannot give one millimetre."* Another top politician wrote during the crisis that it is paramount that *"the values of the Enlightenment take hold of more Muslims;"* with according to her view means that religion *"is superseded as the central force that human beings submit to."* In addition, Jyllands-Posten and its defenders encoded the conflict as a question of enlightened Danes versus unenlightened Muslims. Specifically, Muslims were seen as insufficiently enlightened because they take their religion too seriously and fail to understand that "satire and caricatures of religious and political authorities are not expressions of disrespect for or ridicule of groups because of their faith or belief." The underlying code was that one ought to keep a critical distance to one's commitments, particularly if these are religious commitments. The defenders of the cartoons could thus be seen as promoting what has been called Enlightenment liberalism, the core principle of which is autonomy. They favoured near absolute freedom of expression and justified this principle with reference to something akin to the idea that it promotes autonomy. This camp defended the publication of the cartoons on the basis of the conviction that they were a legitimate contribution to vigorous public debate, which is a prerequisite for democracy and progress. The critics of the cartoons in Denmark, on the other hand, encoded their code as an expression of disrespect for the religious feelings of

Muslims, indeed as one among many contributions to a pervasive anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant public discourse (Rostbøll. 2009:626). Moreover, among liberal theorist, there is a code suggesting, that there is a conflict between the “Enlightenment value” of individual autonomy and the “Reformation value” of respect for diversity. According to this view, Enlightenment liberals are primarily committed to the protection and promotion of the ability of individuals to critically reflect on and choose their own way of life. While Reformation liberals find it most important to protect diversity that is "legitimate differences among individuals and groups over such matter as the nature of the good life, sources of moral authority, reason versus faith, and the like” (Rostbøll. 2009:626). This claim stands out distinctly in the Cartoon Controversy, when Rasmussen refuses to succumb to the request of respectively the Confederation of Danish Industries and Arla. In addition, the “Enlightenment value,” represented here, could be said to follow Kant’s ideal of Enlightenment, while the “Reformation value” represented could be said to follow Burke’s ideal of Enlightenment. It might furthermore be noted, that we find an argument along these lines in “What is Enlightenment?” in which Kant writes that, "it would be a crime against human nature" to protect religious authorities and dogmas against criticism because this would hinder the progress toward "maturity" (Rostbøll. 2009:637). This in contrast, is exactly what Rasmussen and the camp defending the publication of the cartoons expresses. Moreover, looking at, the Prime Minister’s statements during the crisis, it is obvious that we are dealing with a true liberal. However, in the West, there is an enjoyment of a single political culture, with the nation-state as the object of a common loyalty, and a secular conception of law, which makes religion a concern of family and society, but not of the state. People who see all law, all social identity, and all loyalty as issuing from a religious source cannot really form part of this political culture, or the love of country on which it is founded. This does not mean that religion should be excluded entirely from the affairs of state. On the contrary, the liberal belief in the separation of state and civil society implies that religion may thrive in all social institutions in which the citizens wish it to thrive (Scruton. 2002:63-64). Hence, the prime minister also proved to be a true liberal who do not yields when it comes to the fundamental principles of the Danish society. On 24 October, he among other things said, commenting on Ritzau: “*the press should be critical. I must tolerate that as prime minister and it must be tolerated by religions. A free democracy has a core that everything can be questioned, even things that some will perceive as being provocative*”. (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:72). Thereby he also withhold his statement mentioned before, that the state has no influence what so ever, on

what the press chooses to publish, and that it is their right to publish whatever they wishes and to be critical.

For the business community it was not just about saving the millions of DDK in turnovers, which was at stake in the Middle East but also about respecting people's values, beliefs, and tradition. In addition, as the demonstrations were initiated in the Islamic world, the global media failed to recognize that out of hundreds of highly peaceful protest marches, sit-ins, and rallies, only a few in Damascus, Beirut and Pakistani cities and a couple of Nigerian, Indonesian and Somali towns, became violent. In fact, the incidents in the mentioned countries overshadowed the peaceful protests taking place in the rest world. The burning of the Danish flag and embassies, reminded the West, of the riots in the 1700s. What is worth noticing here, is that we are dealing with an intercultural political conflict where the meeting of the liberal mindset (Rasmussen) and the pre-liberal mindset (the Islamic world). Where the last mentioned, among other things, not only wishes to uphold its strong traditional way of thinking, but also is a totally opposite to the Danish society e.g. when it comes to the separation of the religion and the state, where this is not present in any Middle Eastern society. This was also expressed when the 11 ambassadors wrote to Rasmussen, and asked him to take action against Jyllands-Posten. It is obvious that the parties involved decode each other from their own worldviews. The Islamic world decodes Rasmussen from their interpretation of how their society works (the traditional one), and reverse, Rasmussen decodes them from his liberal point of view and how the Danish society works. This is where we experienced the intercultural clash. The lack of understanding, and where Arla was trapped, namely, in an intercultural battle of who was right and wrong, and whose ideals were to be in evidence of the other.

It remains an open and highly debatable issue when the story of the cartoon crisis is written, should Anders Fogh Rasmussen have invited the 11 Muslim ambassadors to the meeting. Would it have made a difference when he still would not meet their demands? Could he have prevented the crisis from taking a dramatic course, if in time he had invited the 11 ambassadors in the State Department, listened to their concerns and given them a quick lesson of Danish democracy, before they were sent home with mission unaccomplished?

For a "yes," talking to the diplomats could not hide their insult that they were dismissed by doormat. The Arab culture is a culture of honour, and honour is collectively. The Danish prime minister showed no Muslim ambassador "respect," and their hurt feelings have hampered a peaceful solution. The argument has been used countless times against Denmark: "Your prime minister

refused to meet our ambassadors! What arrogance!” For a “no,” talk that the rejection was merely a hook that Muslims could hang their insult on. Analysts have argued that it had been just as bad or worse if they had gone empty-handed from the meeting with Anders Fogh Rasmussen. It had only been a second stirred to be offended that he would not accede to their demands. For the prime minister in October it was unthinkable that he should denounce the 12 drawings and guarantee that such violations will never happen again. It would be in deep conflict with his beliefs that provocative satire, also facing religions can develop democracy. He took a decision that he will not ferment this prostration of the Arab dictatorships. It was largely also the opinion of the opposition in October. In addition, polls showed he had the public support for a blank rejection of the Islamic requirements (Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:74).

4.1.5 Freedom of speech or ideological self-gratification?

Although religious anger and sorrow at the caricatures was widespread in the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia. It is argued that many other factors led to the consumer boycott and violent demonstrations. The article concludes that the frustration and anger, those surfaces in the cartoon crisis, has its background in the clash of values that has long characterised the political situation in the Middle East and South Asia, more than in the discourse on freedom of speech in Denmark. In Denmark the main topics of disagreement were 1) the unlimited freedom of expression vs. respecting religious sensitivities, 2) the liberal-conservative government's very restrictive immigration, asylum, and integration policy, and 3) the Prime Minister's decision in October 2005 not to meet and have a dialogue with a group of complaining ambassadors from 11 Muslim countries (Andersen. 2008:6). For Jyllands-Posten, the code was one of free speech and the fact that this was threatened by an increase in self-censorship, based either on consideration for Islam or on fear of retaliation from angry Muslims, who might perceive offences to their faith unless journalists, artists, politicians or scientists demonstrated proper respect for Islam. In his article motivating the newspaper's publication of the drawings of the prophet, which was printed in the same issue as the drawings, culture editor Flemming Rose referred to a number of instances of self-censorship and elaborated his point with the following observation, which was frequently quoted during the ensuing heated debate: *“Modern, secular society is rejected by some Muslims. They lay claim to a special position by insisting on special consideration for their own religious feelings. This is incompatible with a secular democracy and freedom of speech, which require one to be prepared to endure insult, mockery, and ridicule. This certainly does not always make a pretty or agreeable*

spectacle, and it does not mean that religious feelings must at any cost be ridiculed, but in this context, that is of secondary importance.” The publication of the drawings was allegedly meant to serve the purpose of raising a debate concerning free speech and self-censorship, which would establish that a real problem was emerging in Denmark. Rose might have mentioned other instances, which, while not direct expressions of self-censorship. One might well fear could cause it, such as the case of the teacher at the Carsten Niebuhr Institute who, after quoting from the Koran, was beaten up by angry Muslims. Alternatively, the fact that the teaching of Islam at the University of Southern Denmark had been interrupted because it was not the correct interpretation that was being taught. The immediate cause for Jyllands-Posten’s campaign; the difficulties encountered by author Kåre Bluitgen in his efforts to find an artist to create illustrations of the prophet for his children’s book about Muhammad and the fact that the artist he managed to persuade insisted on remaining anonymous, thus constituted but one among a considerable number of incidents (Andersen. 2008:6-7). Nevertheless, the problem of self-censorship in relation to Islam did exist, as most people probably recognise. Scholars who were aware of the matter had already made statements criticising the publication of the drawings, but the issue had yet to become an international one, and was likely viewed by the critics as mainly an expression of the Danish political rights campaign against Islam and Danish Muslims. As such, the matter of the drawings of the prophet constituted nothing neither new nor more remarkable than the many other crude swipes, at Islam with which, writers and politicians connected to so-called “Islamophobic” circles within Danish society had for a long time entertained the public, and which by its critics was termed “the harsh tone of the debate on immigration”. Among critics of Jyllands-Posten’s drawings of the prophet, this became the predominant interpretation. The newspaper’s stubborn insistence that it had acted with the issues of free speech and self-censorship in mind was dismissed by critics as a mere excuse for offending the beliefs of Muslims, as part of an ongoing smear campaign against Islam. According to the critics, the Islamic prohibition against depicting the prophet had to be respected. It served no purpose, they claimed, to offend the religion of others, other than that of causing offence. This code was most succinctly put by former Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs from Venstre, Denmark’s Liberal Party, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, in an article in the daily newspaper Berlingske Tidende, in which he described Jyllands-Posten’s project of initiating a discussion on self-censorship as the newspaper’s *“puerile demonstration of its right to free speech.”* Surely, freedom of speech was a basic civic right within a liberal society, but it was, according to the Danish political leader, not to be seen as an obligation to speak. In other words, freedom of

expression has its limits, including limits which are not only defined by the limitations established in the Danish penal code, but also limits of a moral nature, which concern decency, tolerance, and respect for the religious feelings of others. Jyllands-Posten had crossed this limit, and the newspaper's motive was, according to its critics, not to initiate a sincere debate on free speech and self-censorship, rather it was to smear Islam and Muslims, thereby adding another dimension to the already "*harsh tone of the Danish debate on immigration.*" Rather than being about self-censorship, the discussion developed into a profound moral conflict between those who, in a purely abstract manner, championed freedom of speech as an indisputable principle, and those who insisted that freedom of speech must be limited in consideration of people's religious feelings. The debate soon acquired a moralising tone, concerned with whether or not the paper ought to have done it (Andersen. 2008:8-9). What is essential to notice from an intercultural point of view, and from the encoding model perspective, is that we are dealing with two very different sort of encoding system within the same socio-cultural context.

The idea here seems to be that if it is the very freedom, which hurts the listener, should one continue to speak out in order to emphasize the freedom's uncompromising character. If we do not, according to the argument, we give in to pressure and move onto a slide, that undermines speech, and soon we dare not criticize the sacred cows or those who threw stones. Freedom of expression is always an option, never a requirement. The Danish criminal law clearly forbids such depiction as illustrated in the Jyllands-Posten cartoons. Section 140 of the Danish Criminal Code prohibits "disturbing public order by publicly ridiculing or insulting the dogmas of worship of any lawfully existing religious community in Denmark." However, this law according to the International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights has not been enforced since 1938 (Ghazi. 2006:22).

If you choose not to comment you disparage others, you do not restrict your freedom of speech. You, however, reveal account. As social beings, we constantly bands on our incentives to dedicate ourselves to higher goals. It is this, which solves problems in a world where people have different ways of looking at things. Hence, in Denmark, we are taught to take responsibility for our constitutional freedoms. Understand me, therefore, right. I am not looking for is not a tolerance for totalitarian Islamism. I am looking for contrast, respect for others' eccentricities. Moreover, I am looking for communications that solve problems, rather than pouring gasoline on a cultural battle that already is in flames, because faith is a matter, which we relate emotionally to. It is like the love for the colour green. It must not be explained logically, but seems obvious to those who experience it. We might find it ridiculous, but it is a reality for many Muslims. Should we make fun of their

effects, like perception? By reprinting the cartoons, one insisted only on trouble and not on freedom of expression. The only thing, which is being perceived, is that the Danes make a mockery of Islam. The question is not whether the Mohammed affair puts our freedom of speech under pressure. The question is what makes the media to believe that they can get someone to realize that free speech is closed superstition, culture, and fine feelings. If you did not know better, you would think that free speech was the media's own bid for a religion, or simply ideological self-gratification. Freedom with responsibility is a prerequisite for democratic life and freedom with responsibility is central to a person's ethics.

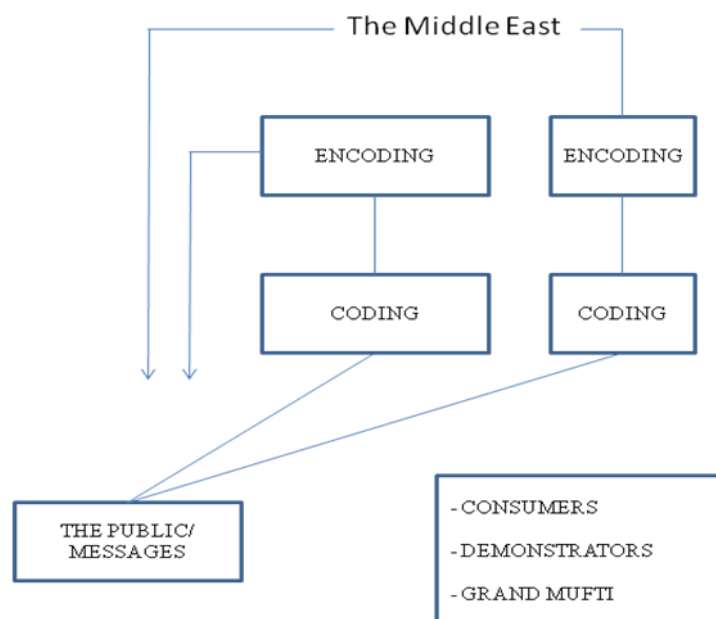
4.1.6 Conclusion.

The Cartoon Controversy has underlined some important facts that both sides need to carefully study in order to fairly understand each other for the sake of a balanced and peaceful world. The question of whether the Prime Minister should have held a meeting with the ambassadors, and the question of whether the publication of the cartoons had to do with freedom of speech or not is still to this day being discussed, whenever the crisis are mentioned. The notably fact in this case, was that Anders Fogh Rasmussen, being influenced both by the Enlightenment and the liberal way of thinking, refused to renounce the basic principles of the Danish society. However, was that, what he would have been forced to do by meeting with the ambassadors? In my opinion, no, because when you rightly argue ideal of the sovereignty of information requires that it is actively shown that freedom's sovereignty precisely conspicuous in that it can hold opposites, contradiction and resistance to enhance understanding. I am of that belief that there was an absolute lack of understanding between the parties involved. Both when it comes to understanding of culture, norms, and values and not least, the way we approach one another and most importantly the way we perceive the world, which will be discussed latter. In the following I will focus on the Muslim world, and how they perceived the same concepts, discussed above, from their world-view. Once more the encoding model will be in focus, as I also will use it to interpret various opinions made within the communication situation.

4.2 The Islamic Civilization – focus on the Umma

“Some Muslims reject the modern, secular society. They demand a special position when they insist on special consideration for their religious feelings. This is incompatible with a secular democracy and freedom of expression in which one must be prepared to accept disdain, mockery and ridicule.”

With this argument, Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons of the Muslim Prophet Mohammed, drawn by 12 Danish cartoonists. The paper had asked a number of cartoonists, notably not illustrators, to depict Mohammed as they imagined him. Twelve persons submitted a drawing to Jyllands-Posten, some of them depicting Mohammed, while others presented a critical comment on Jyllands-Posten’s initiative. Moreover, the drawings triggered a conflict between the newspaper and the Danish Muslims, and caught Arla in the middle, but it needed an impetus to develop into an international conflict between Muslim governments, Muslim populations and radical Islamists on one side, and the Danish government, most Danish political parties and the Danish population on the other side (Bonde. 2007:3). Still dealing with the quite different world-views, I will in this chapter focus on the Muslim world, describing firstly, what freedom of expression means from an Islamic point of view. Secondly, I will look into the lack of any complete understanding of the background and dynamics of the episodes in the Islamic countries and their governmental processes. This chapter will shed light on the Islamic civilization and the codes and encodings that take place within, more precisely, the demonstrations and riots taking place in the Middle East after the publication of the cartoons. Finally, I will seek to reach to an explanation of why we experienced such strong reactions.



4.2.1 Freedom of speech vs. values - from a Muslim point of view

The Islamist battle over values requires symbols in the form, for instance of events and episodes which, when merely referred to, metaphorically incarnate the entire content of struggle. In addition, Jyllands-Posten's drawings of the Prophet had all the makings of a symbol of the Islamist battle over values. In their code, they illustrated, in an easily accessible manner, that the West has no respect for the Muslim faith, but rather the policy of the West aims solely at propagating its own secular ideas, which it considers universal, even if this entails a profound violation of the religious feelings of Muslims. With Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen's early statements in the process, the Muslim societies not only decoded it as insolence and completely unacceptable but also as a lack of respect to the Muslim world. That Rasmussen did not intervene and take the necessary measures against the newspaper involved. It could be argued, that some of the anger on the embassies etc. comes thence. Moreover, the Islamic world might have decoded Rasmussen as a weak political leader, who lacks of skills, as they are used to, at least in their part of the world, that everything is governed by the state (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:230). In addition, the fights for free speech, as represented by the drawings of the Prophet, are from a Muslim world view decoded as a defence of the right to fight Islam by attacking and ridiculing the very messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, who for the Muslim faithful stand as the shining and impeccable example to be emulated. Hence, from a Muslim world view, the code of interfering with the divine creation of God by allowing the people to make its own laws, which is blasphemous, as there are no true laws besides the one given by Allah in the form of the revelations received by the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, the opposition to a notion of freedom of speech, which allows violations of the religious feelings of Muslims, through the creation of caricatures of Allah's chosen messenger, decodes two aspects of the same cause in the Islamic battle over values. In addition, the violation is aimed at all Muslims, irrespective of place and Islamic creed, because they all share the one basic statement of faith, namely, "There is but one God, Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet" (Andersen, 2008:22)

The problem is hence not about the code of criticism but when that borders on ridicule, it is unacceptable, as the cartoons are decoded not as if someone is crusting Islam, but ridiculing it. Additionally, the written laws that formally constitute freedom of expression in a democratic society are only the tip of the iceberg of unwritten social and cultural agreements between the citizens of that society on what they can express publicly in one context or another. When we claim the right to say anything wherever and whenever, we claim a right that cannot be put into practice, because if it were, it would undo itself. Those who systematically exercised this right with the

intention of creating misunderstanding and non-understanding would systematically chip away at the ground of those using it, with the intention of being misunderstood. Freedom of expression that can be used for the systematic production of non-understanding will eventually render itself useless. However, the main challenge to the freedom of expression is currently not external censorship or controls. No one can effectively prevent anyone from saying what he or she wants to anyone anywhere in any context. No, the main challenge to the freedom of expression is the lack of informal controls and agreements, a result of the rapid division of our societies into separate public spheres that no longer communicate with each other, and that therefore cannot work out any informal agreements about how public expressions might, or might not be understood. What is being expressed here is the difference specific socio-cultural orders we meet in this context, and which is basically why the parties involved fail to decode each other's world-views, and therefore talks at cross-purposes.

4.2.2 Freedom of speech is Islamic too.

How do you demonstrate freedom of expression? If, like trees falling in the forest, the only proof of this existence is transgression. What is the difference between free speech and licence to demonise and incite religious hatred? *We know from experience that freedom of speech is not an absolute; it is etiquette. It is an essential ethos for the health of society and the liberty of the individual conscience but an ethos that is best exercised with responsibility, balance and due regard for the existence of others.* This is just an Islamic opinion of freedom of expression (Sadar, 2006:13). Looking at this point of view, it is easily to associate it with the opinion of the 22 ambassadors, Uffe Ellemann Jensen and Arla, during the crisis, as they had a very varied, moderate opinion, which did not step out of the boundaries the Umma's encoding of the concept or came into conflict with it. In addition, *Freedom of opinion refers to man's total freedom of creed and thinking, as well as his freedom of declaring and expressing his point of view peacefully without using a weapon.* This definition or code, if you will, of the concept of freedom of opinion is taken from verses of the Quran, that are concerned with confirming the total freedom of opinion, and the application of Muhammad of these verses in his time with people around him. Moreover, the code of total freedom of opinion is a principle that was assured by Islam since it emerged, and applied by Muhammad and some of his successors (caliphs). Yet this freedom has been forbidden by force of sword during the Umayyads Califate (state). Then the Abbassids came with a theocratic concept of governing the state. That concept was settled by religious texts opposed Quran, but was connected

to Muhammad through hadith. The abbassids theocratic concept transferred into abiding reality, and settled more through the long time of abbassids sovereignty and recording the heritage of Muslims' thoughts and beliefs. That heritage is considered to be against Islam. It became the legislative framework of people, who call for the application of abbassids religious and political system to establish a religious state. Hence, it may come as a surprise to many, but Islam endorses the code of freedom of expression. The easy decoding is too often made that Muslims are hypersensitive because they have no experience of freedom of speech, or just do not believe in the concept, as Rasmussen and Jyllands-Posten for instance did it. However, when it comes to depicting religious authorities, especially in a blasphemous way, then one has overstepped the bounds within the Islamic code of freedom of expression. Moreover, the reasons why Muslims were and still are outraged with the cartoons of the Prophet have little to do with freedom of expression. In their worldview, they have everything to do with Islam-phobia and ugly demonization of Muslims. The cartoon depicting Muhammad with a bomb in his turban might not only indicate that all Muslims are potential terrorists, but also that Islam is a religion of terror, or that Muhammad is used to legitimise terror. In other words, it fuels the hatred against Muslims and constructs them as evil others (Sadar, 2006:13).

4.2.3. The demonstrations

The religious protests in Denmark generated the astonishing international reactions, as Jyllands-Posten published the Mohammed cartoons at a time characterized by very hostile rhetoric towards the Muslim minority in Denmark as well as mounting international tensions between Muslim dominated countries and the Western countries. Danish Imams focused on the religious implications of the cartoons and ignoring the widespread protests from the Danes and Danish Muslims against the hostile public rhetoric towards the Muslim minority (Bonde. 2007:2). Internationally, however, the root causes for the violent protests against the cartoons were quite different and should be seen in a much larger perspective than the Danish one. In December and January, a delegation from the Muslim communities in Denmark travelled to Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey with copies of the cartoons as well as a description, of the conditions for Muslims in Denmark with particular emphasis on the religious aspects and religious racism aimed at Muslims. In the letter accompanying the cartoons, the delegation appeals to everybody, "*who wants to support our fight to defend and support the holy prophet*"? And with all legal means fight for the passing of a general

law, which ensures respect for all things sacred, particularly the Muslim, in a time, which allows attacks on Muslim sanctuaries using “war against terror” as an “excuse” (Bonde. 2007:6)

Following the Prime Minister’s New Year statement, all the signs were that, Egypt which had been the prime mover amongst the Muslim states, seemed intent on closing the case, although, in a statement of 1. January 2006, the OIC urged a boycott of the Danish cultural promotion, “Images of the Middle East.” However, the publication of the cartoons in a Norwegian newspaper on 10 January 2006, changed the main scene in Saudi Arabia, several Imams proposed a trade boycott against Denmark and Norway during the Friday Prayer on 20 January, and the government-appointed Grand Mufti demanded an apology from Jyllands-Posten (Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook. 2007:56). After a few days, the boycott had spread to Kuwait and Yemen followed by the rest of the Middle East and, shortly afterwards Africa, including Nigeria. It also spread to Egypt on 30 January encouraged by the organisation the Muslim Brotherhood, and state controlled newspapers before finally spreading to South East Asia. The boycott was encouraged by advertisement in the Arab newspapers placed by individuals and corporate units. Demonstrations took place in Iraq and other countries, where the Danish flag was burned and individual Danes threatened. Libya withdrew its ambassador and the parliaments of Yemen, Bahrain and Syria condemned the cartoons, as did the Afghan Prime Minister, on a visit to Denmark. Moreover, the fact that the Danish Prime Minister refused to act and hold the newspaper responsible, was understandable and unacceptable in the Middle East. In their code, it is a matter of course that political leaders, kings, or head of state interferes in matters that from Danish encoding concerns the public and not the government. This is also a reason why, in early February 2006, the extent and level of violence of the demonstrations increased. The Danish embassy in Syria was burned down by demonstrators on 3 February, and, on 4 February, the General Consulate in the Lebanon suffered the same fate. In Iran, the Revolutionary Guard and Basij Militia stormed and ransacked the embassy on 6-7 February. In Turkey, puppets depicting the Danish PM were burned by demonstrators outside the consulate in Istanbul. Moreover, in Indonesia, demonstrators attempted to storm the Danish embassy on 3 February, but were stopped by guards. Both here and in Pakistan, the embassy staff were withdrawn. Hence, in the Yemenite capital, Sanàa, 80,000-150,000 people were demonstrating (Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook. 2007:57). The Danish flag was burned in several cities in Iraq. Additionally, in Nigeria members of Parliament burnt both the Danish and the Norwegian flags. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, however, several people died in clashes between police and demonstrators (Danish Foreign Policy Yearbook. 2007:58). Hence, burning of effigies of

“hated enemy leaders,” or national flags, even diplomatic missions are a common practice these days, particularly in the so-called developing world, Muslim countries, being no expectation to this undignified ritual. It is supposed to be the revenge by the underdog – their motto being: if you cannot lay hands on the person of an oppressor, at least show disrespect to the symbols of his power in order to vent your unremitting frustration (Ghazi. 2006:36). However, the Muslim protest over the caricatures of the Prophet published in *Jyllands-Posten* did not pose any threat to the freedom of expression in liberal democracies. They presented a challenge to liberal democracy itself as a political form that is being made parochial within a new global arena (Devji. 2006:3)

In addition, Muslim protesters did not represent some religious tradition that needs to be schooled in the lessons of modern citizenship. Rather their protests brought into being a hypermodern global community whose connections occur by way of mass media alone. From the Philippines to Niger, these men and women communicated with each other only indirectly, neither by plan nor organisation, but through the media itself. Yet it was this very circulation of the offending item as news that also allowed Muslims to represent themselves as a global community in, through, and as, the news. Moreover, they could only do so by way of English as a global language. It is no accident that the cartoon controversy took the Muslim world by storm only when it was reported on the BBC and CNN (Devji 2006:2).

4.2.4 Why did the crisis occur?

Surely, *Jyllands-Posten* knew that depicting Muhammad would be inflammatory, yet they did it anyway. This according to their code of freedom of expression, and Danish humour, and satire, is legal. Many non-Muslims, though, felt that the Muslim reactions to the cartoons was exaggerated, and websites and newspapers all over the world continued to reprint the illustrations in spite of, or perhaps because of, the distress and violence they caused. The uproar is not a unique event, and is not bound solely by the specifics of Islamic law and Western notions of freedom. The interaction between these positions, however, can be encoded, according to sociological observations concerning the behaviour of people in general. What was also difficult to understand from a Western code, was the anger over some cartoons, which, had pass away thousands of years ago. In the Muslim part of the world, there is no separation of “religion and state or church” as the situation is in Denmark. Everything is interrelated and thereby, it goes all hand in hand. Put differently, one controls the other. It would not be wrong to say, that the controversy over the Muhammad cartoons comes from the conflict between the secularized and rationalized Western culture and the anti-

secular Islamic culture. It could be that the West has become so secular and religion so individualized that religious figures, although sacred, are not seen as deserving public rights. Moreover, regardless of the definition of religion it is unquestionable that Islam is one, and that the prophet Muhammad, a major element in the Muslim faith, is held sacred in it. The only unforgivable sin described by the Qur'an is "associationism or idolatry (associating or allowing anything to usurp God's place) and this concern or code for that matter, is not to compromise the unity and transcendence of God. However, this was not a conflict based on the religious beliefs of Muslims and the antireligious beliefs of the secular West; It was based on conflicting ideas of the sacred. While to Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad's sanctity makes him untouchable, his very untouchable-ness strikes at the heart of one of the major sacred concepts held dear in the West: the sanctity of freedom of expression.

4.2.5 Conclusion

We live in a world where access to free expression is a cockpit, a battle for power and territory. We are all interested parties in the rush to define which opinions and ideas are essential in the mental and emotional kitbag of modern citizen. Nevertheless, we are equal in power, authority, knowledge, and access. In an inequitable world, our best ideals can often betray our arrogance and hubris more than they indicate our commitment to inclusion and common humanity.

It seems likely that the most powerful explanation of the crisis that erupted over the publication of the Muhammad cartoons is a combination of the theories presented rather than one or the other. Secularization in the West has led to a growing disenchantment with religion and an understanding that religion is personal and private. With the separation of church and state, new ideas, secular ideas, took over the role of sacred concepts in the lives of westerners. The disjunction between the idea of "freedom of expression" as sacred, and the traditional ineffable nature of Muhammad as sacred was played out in the decision of the Danish newspaper to print the cartoons and subsequently in the controversy that followed. Meanwhile, the inability of rationalized western societies to understand and deal meaningfully with Islamic groups, which do not have a centralized, bureaucratized organizational structure, increased the confusion.

What is essential in this thesis however, is how the handling of crisis-communication hook up to Arla's position in this event. Was Arla's final decision on which side to take, the best position to place itself in relation to the crisis? This will be looked upon in the following, as I will use the two above-mentioned analysis of the two different world views to clear it out.

5. WHEN CULTURES COLLIDE – COMPARISON OF THE TWO CIVILISATIONS

As I now have analysed respectively the western civilisation and the Islamic civilisation separately, it is now time to make a comparison of the two civilisations and analyse the socio-cultural and intercultural decoding of the two civilisations that is being manifested. In addition it would be essential to look state whether Arla's final decision on which side to take, was the best position to place itself in relation to the crisis

5.1. Comparison of the two civilizations

What exactly is Western civilisation, and what holds it together? Politicians, asked to define what we are fighting for in the "war against terrorism," will always say freedom. However, taken by itself, freedom means the emancipation from constraints, including those constraints, which might be needed if a civilisation is to endure. If all that Western civilisation offers is freedom, then it is a civilisation bent on its own destruction. Moreover, freedom flaunted in the face of religious prohibition is an act of aggression, inviting retribution from those whose piety it offends. Islamic civilisation, however, involve a code of common religious belief, based on a sacred text whose law may be misapplied but never altered. It defines itself in terms not of freedom but of submission. *Islam, salm, and salaam* - "submission," "peace," and "safety" - all derive from the verb *salima*, whose primary meaning is "to be secure", "unharm", or "blameless", but which has derived from the meaning "to surrender". The Muslim is the one who has surrendered, submitted, and so obtained security. In that complex etymological knot, is tied a code of society and its rewards far different from anything that has prevailed in modern Europe and America (Scruton. 2002: viii). In addition, Western civilisation also grew from a common religious belief and sacred text, and, like Islam, originated in a religious movement among Semitic people - albeit people living under imperial yoke, for whom submission was already a day-to-day reality. However, Western civilization has left behind its religious belief and its sacred text to place its trust not in a code of religious certainties but in a code of open discussion, trial and error, and the ubiquitousness of doubt (Scruton. 2002:ix-x). It is for this reason that politicians, asked to define what they mean by the "West," and what the "war against terrorism" is supposed to be defending, will invariably mention freedom as the fundamental idea. Without freedom, there cannot be government by consent; and it is the freedom to participate in the process of government, and to protest against, dissent form, and oppose the decisions that are made in my name, that confer on me the dignity of citizenship. Put very briefly, the difference between the West and the rest is that Western societies are governed by

politics; the rest are ruled by power (Scruton. 2002: 6-7). This definition corresponds to Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen's statement, in his first big interview to Jyllands-Posten, concerning the cartoons, where he said: *“One of the reasons why our society has experienced such tremendous progress not only in the last century, but for several centuries, is that there have been people who have had the courage to provoke (...). It is absolutely fundamental that of enlightened free society comes longer than unenlightened and illiberal societies, precisely because few dare to provoke and criticize authorities, whether it is political or religious authorities.”*

When you and I exchange promises, the resulting contract is freely undertaken, and any breach does violence not merely to the other but also to the self, since it is a repudiation of a well-grounded rational choice. In addition, Freedom and obedience are the same. This was the thought that so excited Rousseau and the thought Kant was to develop into a comprehensive theory of secular morality. A state founded on a social contract is therefore maximally respectful of the autonomy, freedom, and dignity of the individual, like in Denmark. Those things which no rational being can agree to surrender - life, limb, and conscience - become, in the contractarian view of things, absolute entitlements or human rights (Scruton. 2002: 7-8). Moreover, the liberal thought-experiment is in fact the attenuated reflection of a particular kind of membership, and it is one that simply lacks credibility in societies where the political idea of membership has failed to replace the warm demands of religion. It is not possible for a Muslim to believe that the conception of the good that is so clearly specified in all the intricate laws and maxims of the Quran is too excluded from the social contract. On the contrary, in a Muslim decoding this conception and this alone, gives legitimacy to the political order: a thought, which has the disturbing corollary that the political order is almost everywhere illegitimate and nowhere more so than in the states where Islam is the official faith. People become conscious of their identity, and of the distinction between those who share it and those who do not, in many ways. Language, kinship, religion, and territory are all important, and all have fed into the various national and transnational ideologies that have animated modern politics (Scruton 2002:15). In contrast, this is what happened on both sides during the crisis. People in Denmark became more conscious of what it meant to be Danish, as they started defending the principles on which the country is founded, and which symbolises what it means to be Danish. In contrast, People in the Muslim part of the world became more conscious of the importance of defending their religion against external forces, which not only violated the person and principles on which the religion is founded, but also threatened the entire Ummah.

The Cartoon Controversy has underlined some important facts that both sides need to carefully study in order to fairly understand each other for the sake of a balanced and peaceful world. The question of whether the Prime Minister should have held a meeting with the ambassadors, and the question of whether the publication of the cartoons had to do with freedom of speech or not is still to this day being discussed, whenever the crisis are mentioned. The notably fact in this case, was that Anders Fogh Rasmussen, being influenced both by the Enlightenment and the liberal kode of thinking, refused to renounce the basic principles of the Danish society. However, was that, what he would have been forced to do by meeting with the ambassadors? In my opinion, no, because when you rightly argue ideal of the sovereignty of information requires that it is actively shown that freedom's sovereignty precisely conspicuous in that it can hold opposites, contradiction and resistance to enhance understanding. I am of that belief that there was an absolute lack of understanding between the parties involved. With the Prime Minister's encoding of the messages send by the ambassadors, he failed to look outside the four walls of is worldview, and thereby provoked an international crisis. In addition, the Cartoon Crisis is a combination of the theories presented rather than one or the other. Secularization in the West has led to a growing disenchantment with religion and an understanding that religion is personal and private. With the separation of church and state, new ideas, secular ideas, took over the role of sacred concepts in the lives of westerners. Moreover, the disjunction between the idea of "freedom of expression" as sacred, and the traditional ineffable nature of Muhammad as sacred was played out in the decision of the Danish newspaper to print the cartoons and subsequently in the controversy that followed. Meanwhile, the inability of rationalized western societies to understand and deal meaningfully with Islamic groups, which do not have a centralized, bureaucratized organizational structure, increased the confusion. No matter which point we race or discuss in this context, it is evident, that the two civilisations are very different on each ground we discuss. Both when it comes to the code of values, religion, norms, etc. the system of codes, coding and decoding is simply different. However, being, a Danish-Swedish company caught in the middle of the battle of codes, it was not difficult to choose side. As the company knew what was at stake if they did not correspond, or take the side they did. Losing a market where they have been established for 40 years, from one day to the other, because of others actions, was simply not affordable. Therefore, they chose to appeal to the only stake-holder group who save their business, which was the Arabian consumers. As we will see in the following chapter.

5.2 Conclusion

The cartoon crisis has given rise to a very important acknowledgement, namely that globalisation from a company's perspective is not just about finances and gaining market shares, but it is to a great extent also about culture and the handling of cultural differences. Moreover, the cartoon crisis, being the second largest event in Danish history since World War II, also demonstrated that we not only witnessed a cultural clash rather we witnessed a clash between two very different views of life, with each their own values, set of rules and set of norms rules. Some authors have even characterised it a clash of civilizations. A clash if you will that remind us that there is still a need to bridge the gap between cultures and thereby create mutual respect and understanding despite the fact that we live in a small world. In addition, Danes had a very short time had had to reassess their position in a globalized world. We have seen that the external perception of us has changed dramatically and abruptly. The Danish identity has been, if not shattered, then at least shaken. More specifically, a number of Danish companies had to recognize that being Danish not only can be an absolute good in the eyes of others, but can also be a direct cause for rejection. Danish firms, like firms from other countries have noted that their origin was a risk factor in marketing. Hence, Danish companies exporting to markets where Islam is the dominant religion, has woken up to a situation that has changed overnight. The question is what makes these businesses up in the current debacle? What do the Danish companies do in a situation such as we saw in many countries throughout the Middle and Far East, where Danish products were boycotted? What should Danish companies do when their products are taken off the shelves in supermarkets, partly because they cannot be sold, and partly because in some cases it is simply risky to pursue Danish products? In the following, I will focus on which intercultural crisis-communication approach Arla made use of, to stop the boycott of its products. This will serve to answer the last question in my problem statement of *whether Arla has been able to set up principles for a crisis preparedness that enables the company to handle crisis better.*

6. ARLA'S CRISIS COMMUNICATION APPROACH TO STOP THE BOYCOTT

Having been a well-established company on the Middle Eastern market, for 40 years. It was a very unusual and complex situation that Arla was put in, seen from an intercultural point of view, during the cartoon crisis. After failing to convince both the Danish government and Jyllands-Posten that it was necessary to take a stand on the cartoon, the company took the situation in their own hands, as the essential focus point in this case is that Arla's reputation gets damaged in connection with the intercultural encoding. What will therefore be essential to focus on here, in order to be able to answer the last question in the problem statement from an intercultural crisis management point of view, is the ad, Arla chose to publish in the Middle Eastern newspapers on 18 March 2006.

6.1 The ad

In the beginning of March, Arla's loss was estimated to DKK 400 million. After implementing all the steps in their CMP, among others, trying to mediate between the parties involved in order to end the boycott, they could no longer afford to wait and therefore choose to take the situation in their own hands; they simply wanted to regain the Middle Eastern consumer's confidence. Arla had now reached the stage that Andreas Lundby, referred to in the fax to Per Gæmelke, and to the Danish Prime Minister, stating: ***"I'm convinced, that nothing will happen, until someone steps forward with a more exact apology. In worst case, we at Arla will be compelled to go a step further with dissociation. That, we do not prefer"*** (view enclosure 1). The consumers have since the end of January embargoed the products in protest against the cartoons, and it was now the time for Arla to go a step further with a dissociation, therefore people at Arla had confident that an advertisement in Middle Eastern newspapers would end the boycott.

On 18 March 2006. In a direct appeal to Al Qaradawis conference in Bahrain, Arla choose to public a full-page ad in 25 Arabic newspapers (view enclosure 5.). The ad, provide us with background information of the company, that it has been 40 years on the market, and its background as a Danish-Swedish cooperative, owned by farmers. Moreover, the company repeats its distancing from the cartoons, from the Gulf-food trade fair in Dubai a month ago. In addition, Arla emphasises that through its 40 years in the Middle East, they have learned that justice and tolerance are fundamental values of Islam, and the add also ascertain that Arla was not affect by a boycott because of their own action, on that basis the consumers were asked to reconsider their stance towards Arla. Chief of overseas divisions, Finn Hansen, expressed the same day that the company

hoped that the Arabic consumers would consider if it was fair to boycott a dairy company which had nothing to do with the cartoons (Arla forsøger et comeback i Mellemøsten. 18 March 2006).

In this case the Arab consumers, and the 300 religious Muslim leaders attending the conference in Bahrain, which had the significant impact on the company were the target audience of the ad. The target audience was therefore not the Danish population. However, if we consider the ad seen from a Danish code or from a Danish decoding, there is a number of factors that act dubious. It is in this context interesting to note that, what gives the ad effectiveness and works reliably in an Arabic context, not necessarily have the same effect in a Danish context. There may thus, be made questioned whether Arla can actually vouch for the understanding and respect. There are two special circumstances in this sentence, which in this context stand out. The first is that it is not explicit, the "reaction" Arla understands and respect. By use of indirectness to avoid sending identifying with the Arab readers, which specific reactions, it acknowledges from the company point of view. This firm understanding and respect, of course, the best conditions for the ad may create maximum impact in the Arab countries. Facing a critical public in Denmark, Arla choose accommodate the critical Danish population by having an open dialog in order to assure that the organisation to a certain degree was concurrent with its stakeholders. When a company demonstrate open dialogue with its stakeholders and leave trace of transparency, it is accepted by the outside world, and thereby the company gets its "license to operate." (Coombs, 2007: 76)

Arla got special treatment at the conference, as a direct result of the disputed ad in the 25 newspapers, the weekend before the conference. The add procured the Danish-Swedish owned dairy group its own item 19 at the conference's concluding certificate, which sounded as follows; *"the conference appreciate Arla Foods' position, which has declares its objections against the drawings and reject the grounds on which they were published. The conference is by the perception that it was a good underlying basis in order to get a dialog with the company with a view to reach a common understanding."* Hence, Arla obtained what it wanted: a religious recognition of its product now deserved to come back on the shelves in the Middle Eastern stores. The two persons representing Arla at the conference propounded their argument as follows: *"we had nothing to do with the drawings, we have dissociated ourselves from them and the boycott affects us, the innocents"*. The result was perfect. Arla obtained a new and improved certificate signed by the influential imam from Qatar. In the end of March 2006, their products were back on the shelves in some Middle Eastern stores and supermarkets. Moreover, a number of newspapers in the region wrote that the boycott of Arla Foods' butter and cheese has been abolished, and that religious

leaders urge the consumers to stop the boycott, also other Danish company' products were put back on the shelves ("Langsom afvikling af boykot" 30. March 2006).

6.2. *Back on track*

In the beginning of April, Arla could state that the consumers were positive towards the products. On the other hand, they also knew that there were still some consumers who were sceptical towards the company and its products, which was why the company choose to forward think a marketing campaign in order to ensure the company's future in the region. Among other things, Arla choose to sponsor humanitarian projects, and helping disabled children, cancer patients as well as the poor and starving people in the region. Moreover, they decided to support activities that create more understanding between the world's religions and cultures. *"We wish to back the initiative and prove that different cultures are able to live side by, otherwise it would be difficult for us to act as a global company"*, Finn Hansen, said ("Arla forventer snarligt comeback i Saudi Arabien". 5 April 2006). The following day Arla announced that they had decided to sponsor an international conference, which had the purpose of creating a better understanding and appreciation of the world's religions and cultures. Only through a better common understanding and respect between religions and cultures, we are able to avoid misunderstanding and thereby hopefully avoid episodes which prompt hate and violence ("Arla enters 3000 shops in the Mid. East" 6 April 2006). In addition, CEO Peter Tuborgh, also highlighted that respect and sympathy for religious and cultural diversity is central conditions when operating a global business; "the whole basis of our business, which today has 70 per cent of our turnover outside Scandinavia," moreover he also highlighted the importance of respect being mutual and that dialogue is the key to every solution. This must be considered in conjunction with that Arla's intention to restore trust relationship to Muslim consumers and therefore wishes to be a sympathetic and trustworthy character that sets the moral and ethical virtues of high. Indeed, this was the company's active marketing campaign, however, the big question that everyone waiting for was whether the consumers would buy the products or not, now that they were put back on the shelves. While Arla was held out in the cold, more local and international competitors had entered the market and won the shelves where Arla's products used to be. This not only put the company in an increased competition, but it also put an enormous communication task ahead of them, as they had to convince the consumers to buy their products. In order to communicate the message, the company reprinted the declaration from a number of religious leaders, who had urged the consumers to stop boycotting in a number of Arabic

newspapers. Moreover, the active marketing plan also contained some CSR-activities as mentioned previously, namely supporting humanitarian activities. Thereby, the company ensured that these initiatives were in the line with the initiatives that they have on their domestic markets in Denmark, Sweden and the UK, where they during a longer period have supported such causes (“Arla soon expect comeback in the Saudi Arabia” 5 April 2006).

6.3 The intercultural communication situation

When Arla placed an advertisement in the media in the Middle East in connection with Cartoon Crisis, the situational code, seen from Kragh’s decoding model, it can be described very briefly as follows. Arla attempts during a crisis (consumer boycotts in the Middle East), to communicate in a certain place (the Arab media), to certain recipients (the Arab consumers), at a given time (after an attempt to raise the boycott by any other means failed. Regarding the organizational context, including Arla, it is characterized by being a multinational group of farmers who shareholders, and with Danish leadership. Headquarters are located in Denmark, but we have factories and branches in several countries, including Saudi Arabia, and often locally with Danish leadership. Regarding the societal or national cultural context, this is an intercultural context, and communication between parties from different national cultures. The communication takes place in the Middle East, which is the reason that this culture, or rather these cultures set the framework for the choice of strategy. Namely, to communicate directly with the Arab consumers with their cultural characteristics (religion, politics , perceptions of ethics, etc..) through the Arab print media with their characteristics and using a genre involving certain rhetorical tactics suited to the culture (Johansen and Frandsen,2007:285-286). Moreover, a company that operates across different national cultures, for example, during a crisis. Must be incorporated in different cultural contexts at all levels, from national culture to organizational culture (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:331). As mentioned earlier there is a lack of interest in the intercultural dimension. There is a widespread notion that public relations is an "American invention" and that other cultures can readily adopt the U.S. study programs and theories. In his article, "Reframing the Organizational Exigency: Taking a New Approach in Crisis Research" (2004) inform the American researcher Curt Bechler a criticism of the way so far have researched crises, crisis management and crisis communications, a criticism that just makes aware of the cultural embedding of crises. Bechler divides the previous research in two areas of crisis preparation and crisis response, which may be brought two different perspectives: a symbolic perspective, which focus on the language you use to influence how the stakeholders

perceive the organization and crisis and a technical perspective, focusing on crisis preparation and crisis planning. If we stick to the first mentioned is just what Arla did for the ad, namely to use a symbolic language that is applied to affect the primary stakeholder group which has the strongest influence on the organization. In addition, culture constitutes at the same time a threat and an opportunity for the crisis management. On the one hand, organizational culture accelerates a crisis by acting as an accelerator, and on the other hand, culture can be the core of an organization's ability to handle threatening situations. It is culture that is essential if an organization is ready or mature enough to handle a crisis. Arla, however, showed that they were able to cope with the intercultural communication situations with flying colours (Johansen and Frandsen, 2007:343)

The company's offensive strategy where the vital breakthrough was the advertisement lifted the boycott in the Middle East. Today, Arla has been able to rebuild the good relations they had to their business partners; however, the consumers in the Middle East are divided into two groups. Some are willing to buy Danish goods and some are not. Therefore, the expected sale for 2009 is about 70 per cent of the quantity of what was sold in 2005. *"So we are on track, though with lower expectations prior to the cartoon crisis"* (Astrid's correspondence – enclosure 2). Moreover, the company initiated several CSR initiatives in the region, which copes with the CSR initiatives on their other market.

6.4 Conclusion

The question whether Arla has been able to set up principles for a crisis preparedness that enables the company to handle crisis better, must be acknowledge. The fact that the company has a large business in the Middle East and has been on the market for 40 years, has given them a huge advance in comparison to other companies, as they have gain great insight and knowledge about the region, that perhaps others do not have. Moreover, the Cartoon Controversy reminded them, that they are not only a global company, but also a Scandinavian company, which is a good starting point to work with, in order to be able to handle global crisis better and set up principles for crises preparedness. This is, the strategy that Arla works according to.

7. CONCLUSION

Arla and Cartoon Crisis is the story of a large dairy company, which up to the beginning of the crisis had a bad reputation because of his aggressive behaviour towards competitors on the Danish market. However, in its handling of crisis management and crisis communications in connection with the Cartoon Controversy, respectively in Denmark and in the Middle East, they knew how to handle the situation in an appropriate way. Moreover, it was a victim of the crisis, which meant that many did take sympathy for them, so that the whole process actually led to some improvement in reputation. This does not exclude that some Danish citizens and consumers felt that Arla turned their back to Danish core values of democracy and free speech. In addition, Arla and Cartoon Controversy is also the story of how complex and demanding crisis communication. There have been days with effect from 22 or 23 January 2006 and the following weeks and months with enormous time pressure. It is not difficult to identify the publication of twelve drawings as a butterfly effect, a small event with huge implications. However, Arla always managed to prepare the ground for cooperative debate and play in virtually all of its stakeholders. Nevertheless, they tried to be open and always engage in dialogue. This applies not only in Denmark but also, and perhaps most importantly, in the Middle East. It is in all cases here, that one takes the biggest risk with publication of the ad for 19 March 2006.

Crisis communication is not only complex and demanding because there is an unpredictable communication situations involved. Moreover, it is also complex and demanding, because there are so many coding and decoding to take account of the rhetorical arena. In the Middle East, there are, governments, political or religious leaders working for their own agendas, customers, employees and partners. Whereas, in Denmark we find, the government, interest groups such as the agriculture council, customers, employees, media and women's organizations. In contrast, to general theories of crisis communication as image restoration, and Coombs' theory of crisis communication as relationship management. Kragh's model has the ability of getting the complexity of crisis communication, and its demanding character, and intercultural character to step forward and is presented clearer. Crisis Communications is much more than a verbal defence strategies and attribution of crisis responsibility as the analysis above has given the impression. In contrast, it is about many different communication processes involving different objectives, codes, and decoding. Moreover, the global and cultural interaction makes new demands on the company, which now more fully earlier to communicate and create its own leanings. This implies that the company thinks about its communications organization. That organize themselves to promote dialogue is a place

that can be challenged by employees, customers, media and public. We live in a world where countries are closely interwoven, and more interdependent. The global-oriented organization must constantly be aware of its internal and external relationships as the case with Arla.

8. ENCLOSURES

Enclosure 1. Vice CEO, Andreas Lundby's letter to the president of Danish Agricultural, Per Gæmelke and PM, Anders Fogh Rasmussen

(Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:133).

“In general the situation is uttermost critical and has been worsening since yesterday”, Andreas Lundby wrote, mentioning four points:

- 1) Saudi TV is running an information campaign telling the population to boycott Lurpak butter, Three Cows feta and PUCK cream cheese*
- 2) A number of retailers stopped selling our product yesterday, and this morning no one wanted to accept our consignment. The large supermarkets are taking the products of the shelves*
- 3) The Saudi-Arabian Mufti marked this morning in TV and on the radio, that all Danish products must be boycotted. This is by far serious, and it's only a matter of time before the ports close for all imports. They demand an official apology from Denmark. So saying, many Danish companies will be involved, Danfoss, Grundfos, Mærsk etc.*
- 4) We receive many e-mails, enclosed you will find a few including direct threats of total boycott after today (...)*

I'm convinced, that nothing will happen, until someone steps forward with a more exact apology. In worst case we at Arla will be compelled to go a step further with dissociation. That, we do not prefer.

I would suggest that you inform the prime minister about the seriousness of the situation as soon as possible

Yours sincerely.

Arla Foods a.m.b.a.

Andreas Lundby

Enclosure 2. Correspondence with, director group communication, Astrid Gade Nielsen.

Question 1: When one reads about what Arla experienced during the cartoon crisis, I can among others refer to the book “the Provocateur and the Prophet – the cartoon crisis behind the scenes” written by chief sub-editor, John Hansen and journalist, Kim Hundevadt at Jyllands-Posten, one gets the impression that people at Arla knew what was on stake, but chose to remain silent at first, as vital events took place far from Denmark and because Arla did not have any influence on the situation escalating nor took part in the events which stated the whole incident. Instead the company waited for the government or Jyllands-Posten to take action. Did you at that point consider applying to your suppliers and explain to them, that the company distanced itself from the cartoon like you did in the advertisement you printed in the Middle Eastern newspapers 19 March 2006?

Reply: *“It is true that Arla Foods increasingly knew about the discussions that took place in the Middle East regarding the cartoons. We were met with questions from both our business partners as well as our customers in the region. At that point, we explained the situation as well as the debate in Denmark. However the reason we were affected by the boycott is first and foremost because we are a consumer oriented company, which makes our products visible at the shelves in the supermarkets. When the Arab populations were urged to boycott Danish products January 2006, both our cheese and butter were visible and thereby an easy target for the consumers to boycott”*

Question 2: In a press release on the 31 January 2006, CEO Peder Tuborgh said among other things that *”it will take years for such wound to heal, however we seek a dialog which can solve the conflict, so that we get the opportunity to recover and restore our business in the Middle East and the good relations we have had in the region of 30 years”*

Do you believe that you have been able to this day, to restore the good relations you have had in the region after the crisis? Or do you still experience consumers refusing to buy your products because they are Danish?

Reply: *“As a company we have been able to restore the good relations to most of our costumers. However there are still costumers refusing to buy Danish products. Likewise there is a split among the consumers whether they want to buy Danish products or not”.*

Question 3: How did you experience the reprinting of the cartoons in 2007? Did you fear yet another massive boycott of your products? If yes, in what way did you prepare yourself?

Reply: *“We had the impression from our customers that there would not be a massive boycott like in 2005. The way we prepared ourselves was that we initiated a series of meeting with our customers in order to keep a dialog open about the case’ development”*

Question 4: In some of the article at your homepage, it says that Arla has initiated some CSR initiatives in the Middle East, in order to furtherance dialog and understanding between the company and the local populations. How did the locals in the countries in question react to this? Were you meet with open arms or did there exist a certain astonishment of why you took the initiated the CSR initiatives after the boycott? Have you initiated other initiatives in the region in order to furtherance the dialog and understanding between your company and the consumers?

Reply: *“yes we have initiated some CSR initiatives in the region. These were the same the costumers’ acknowledged in 2007, when they were under growing pressure of taking Danish products of the shelves. We have experienced that the local populations have been very positive to the initiatives”*

Question 5: The advertisement that the company prints in the Middle Eastern newspapers on 19 March 2006, raises infuriation in Denmark and Arla is among other things accused of speaking with two tongues, how did the company experience that episode and how did you handle it? I have read though that you opened a blog on your homepage where you communicated directly with the consumers, who had a comment or a question to the advertisement, but did you initiate other things in order to cope with this situation?

Reply: *“No, the best we could do in order to avoid the accusation of talking with two tongues, was to say the same both in Denmark and the Middle East. However, it was the Arabic translation of the message that provoke infuriation among many people in Denmark”.*

Question 6: Lastly I would like to know, what Arla’s position is today, and how the export to the region is going. It would be very helpful if you could provide me with some figures, or if you could refer to certain pages on your website, where I could find such information

Reply: *“our expected sale for 2009 is approximately at 70 per cent compared to the amount we sold in 2005. So we are on track, however with lower expectations prior to the cartoon crisis”.*

Enclosure 3. Letter from the Muslim ambassadors to Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, 12 October 2005

Source www.danmarkshistorien.dk

Excellency,

The undersigned Ambassadors, Cd'a.i. and Head of Palestinian General Delegation accredited to Denmark take this opportunity to draw your attention to an urgent matter. This pertains to on-going smearing campaign in Danish public circles and media against Islam and Muslims. Radio Holger's remarks for which it was indicted, DF MP and Mayoral candidate Louise Frevert's derogatory remarks, Culture Minister Brian Mikkelsen's statement on war against Muslims and Daily Jyllands-Posten's cultural page inviting people to draw sketches of Holy Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) are some recent examples. We strongly feel that casting aspersions on Islam as a religion and publishing demeaning caricatures of Holy Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) goes against the spirit of Danish values of tolerance and civil society. This is on the whole a very discriminatory tendency and does not bode well with the high human rights standards of Denmark. We may underline that it can also cause reactions in Muslim countries and among Muslim communities in Europe.

In your speech at the opening of Danish Parliament, Your Excellency rightly underlined that terrorists should not be allowed to abuse Islam for their crimes. In the same token, Danish press and public representatives should not be allowed to abuse Islam in the name of democracy, freedom of expression and human rights, the values that we all share. We deplore these statements and publications and urge Your Excellency's government to take all those responsible to task under law of the land in the interest of inter-faith harmony, better integration and Denmark's overall relations with Muslim world. We rest assured that you will take all steps necessary.

Given the sensitive nature of the matter, we request an urgent meeting at your convenience. An early response would be greatly appreciated. Please accept, Excellency, best wishes and assurances of our highest consideration.

Ambassador of Turkey

(Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Hejailan)

Ambassador of Saudi Arabia

(Ahmed Danialy)

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran

(Javed A. Qureshi)

Ambassador of Pakistan

(Mona Omar Attia)

Ambassador of Egypt

(Perwitorini Wijono)

Ambassador of Indonesia

(Latifa Benazza)

Ambassador of Algeria

(Sead Maslo)

Ambassador of Bosnia Herzegovina

(Mohammed E.R. Rimali)

www.danmarkshistorien.dk,

Institut for Historie og

Områdestudier, Aarhus

Universitet

Libyan Embassy

(El Houssaine Ouestitane)

Charge d.Affaires a.i. of Marocco

(Maie F.B. Sarraf)

Head of Palestinian General Delegation

CC: H.E. Per Stig Møller, Foreign Minister, Royal Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Enclosure 4. Letter from CEO, Peder Tuborgh to the Prime Minister

(Hansen and Hundevadt. 2006:152-153)

Dear Anders Fogh Rasmussen

I'm writing to you to ask you for the government's active involvement to solve this conflict, which has now reached unheard proportions. The debate of freedom of speech, which we all support, is an issue concerning domestic political affairs. On the contrary the case is now that the populations in the Arabic countries are of the belief that the official Denmark has offended their religion in the possible way ever. I assume that the government wishes to see this misunderstanding redressed immediately.

It is in my opinion the government's responsibility to deal with this irreversible damage, which has afflicted Danish workplaces and Danish interests in the Middle East and actively contributed to secure the freedom of action of Danish companies. I therefore ask urge the Prime Minister to actively step into the scene and be a frontier to create positive dialog and communicate comprehensive information to the populations of the Arabic countries.

We at Arla Foods have many years of experience and good relations to the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia. I have among other places lived in Riyadh in 4-5 years. It is our clear position and experience that this conflict cannot be solved unless the Prime Minister himself lead the way to dialogue, especially with the Saudi Arabian population.

I hereby repeat that I wish for an immediate meeting with the Prime Minister, in order to explain Arla's situation and to suggest in which way Denmark immediately should launch an information campaign in Saudi Arabia. Arla will be happy to participate in all sorts of resources in a campaign from Danish side.

Enclosed you will find an outline of Arla's situation. As the matter of fact I cannot mentioned an incident which has had a disastrous effect, with consequences for both our employees as well as our stakeholders, approx 11,000 Danish and Swedish farmers.

I look forward receiving an answer to this request.

Enclosure 5. Advertisement in the Middle East

(“Arla forsøger et comeback i Mellemøsten”, arlafoods.dk 18-03-2006)

Arla foods distancing itself from the cartoons

Statement from Arla Foods

At Arla Foods we feel that it is our duty to bring to your attention our position on the unfortunate event which took place a few months ago. We are also addressing the conference for International Support for the Prophet to take place on March 22nd and 23rd 2006 to explain our point of view.

Arla Foods distance itself from the act of Jyllands-Posten in choosing to print caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad and we do not share the newspaper's reasons for doing so.

Having been in the Middle East for 40 years, participating as an active and integrated part of the community, we understand that you feel offended. Our presence in the region has brought us knowledge of your culture, values and your religion, Islam. This understanding has been the basis of our being able to provide you with good products of the highest quality and with the taste you demand through many years. We have built brands such as Lurpak, Puck, The Three Cows and Dano through your confidence in our products. Therefore we understand and respect your reaction, leading to the boycott of our products as a result of the irresponsible and unfortunate incident.

We would also like to use this opportunity to provide you with vital information about our company. Arla is a Danish-Swedish cooperative, owned by the farmers. Our subsidiary in the Middle East has investors and business partners from the Arab world. Arla is employing on the order of 1.000 Muslims in the Arab and Islamic world together with more than 250 in Europe. All of them have felt offended by these cartoons. Arla's trade was hit in the Middle East not as a result of our own actions but as a result of those of others.

Honored citizens, the years we have been in your world has taught us that justice and tolerance are fundamental values of Islam. We would like to cooperate with Islamic organizations to find a solution to the boycott of Arla's products. We only ask you to consider this and hopefully, to consider your stance towards our company.

Now you know more about who we are, how we think and what we think. We will leave the rest up to you.

Arla Foods

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