



Article

Images of Muslims and Islam in Swedish Christian and secular news discourse

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Abstract

This article is a descriptive comparative quantitative content analysis of the construction of Islam and Muslims in 2006–2007 in four Swedish publications – the liberal newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* representing mainstream media, the Evangelical newspaper *Dagen*, the fundamentalist newspaper *Världen idag* representing the Christian right, and the journal *SD-Kuriren*, the official organ of the Sweden Democrats, a neo-nationalist party. The aim is to see where a chasm between those media that accept the presence of Muslims and Islam in Sweden, and those that do not, occurs. The results put the liberal *Dagens Nyheter* and the Evangelical *Dagen* on one side of the divide and the fundamentalist *Världen idag* and the neo-nationalist *SD-Kuriren* on the other. *Världen idag* and *SD-Kuriren* tend to describe Muslims and Islam as threatening, and ‘our’ elite as retreating. In these two media, Muslims are consistently described as aggressive and the cause of social and political problems. Finally, in both media, Muslims are related to negative behavior; good Muslim behavior is constantly disregarded, while bad behavior is assumed to reflect their true character. *Världen idag* also claims that Islam is incompatible with democracy. Liberal *Dagens Nyheter* and Evangelical *Dagen* avoid describing Muslims and Islam as a threat and more often seek constructive solutions to different problems. *Dagens Nyheter* moreover describes conflicts between Muslim and Christian actors in political, not religious, terms. *Dagen* also sees Muslims and Christians alike as victims of the forces of secularization.

Keywords

Christian media, Islamophobia, media image, neo-nationalist media, Sweden democrats, Swedish media

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Introduction

The presence of a Muslim minority in Sweden is recent. Most Swedes have accepted this demographic and societal change, and so have most media and political parties, the Sweden Democrats being the most important exception. However Sweden is still divided, and there is a chasm between those accepting this change and those who do not.

This article is a comparative quantitative content analysis of Swedish media discourse on Muslims and Islam from 2006–2007 in two Christian and two secular publications. The overarching aim is to reveal where an important discursive chasm appears in the Swedish media landscape regarding the perception of Muslims and Islam. Four media have been selected strategically: *Dagens Nyheter*,¹ the Swedish morning paper with the largest circulation, representing a liberal and secular Swedish mainstream media. *SD-Kuriren*² is a much smaller media product, a journal representing a neo-nationalist political party, the Sweden Democrats. Thus, it deviates from *Dagens Nyheter* in character, in regard to its purpose, size, and independence. However, since *SD-Kuriren* is the leading neo-nationalist journal or newspaper in the Swedish market, it has been selected for analysis.

The two remaining newspapers are conservative Christian and comparatively small: *Dagen*³ is conservative, Evangelical, and sometimes called an ecumenical, newspaper. *Världen idag*⁴ is formally independent, but has close ties to *Livets ord* (Word of Life) in Uppsala, a charismatic fundamentalist church.

This is not the first study analyzing Western elite discourse on Muslims and Islam. Such research has been an important academic field ever since Edward Said's book *Orientalism* earned repute in the 1980s. According to Said and most scholars within the field, the dominant discourse on Muslims and Islam is negative. Muslims and Arabs have become the predominant 'other', and everything that 'we' are not (Shaheen, 1985: 162). 'They' are supposedly irrational (Said, 1978: 40, 287, 317), violent and inclined to terror (Beeman, 2005: 140–148). Since 'they' have no proper conscience (Massad, 2007: 44) 'they' only understand force (p. 45) or sometimes shame and humiliation (Said, 1978: 4–5). Likewise 'they' are represented as static, stagnant, misogynic, superstitious (Massad, 2007: 13), and despotic (Brasted, 1997: 7). Some images change though. Until the end of the 19th century, Arabs were described as decadent, in moral decline, degenerate, fallen, and sexually licentious (Massad, 2007: 8). Nineteenth-century Orientalists had a 'fascination with the sexual desires and lives of Arabs' (p. 47). Interestingly, today it is in fact the Arabs' alleged repression of sexual freedoms which the West assaults (p. 37). However, over the years 'they' remained 'our' inferior antithesis.

According to Said (1978), this discourse became more diffused, and 'has seemed more persuasive and influential, in the West than any other "coverage" or interpretation' (p. 169) since it was reproduced by a variety of discursive elites, such as the academy, the government, poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists (pp. 2–3), and the media (p. 169). In recent years, this discourse has also been reproduced in Eurabia literature, with Giselle Littman as a frontal figure (Steiner, 2010: 58–90) and in Evangelical, mostly Christian Zionist, literature, primarily in the United States, but also in Europe (Steiner, 2010: 91–135, 2013).

Studies confirm that the media also contribute to Orientalist discourse (Abrahamian, 2003; Nohrstedt and Camauër, 2006: 17). Arabs and Muslims are represented as violent

and threatening (Manning, 2006: 131). Muslims also supposedly threaten Western mainstream values and are accused of causing lasting tensions between ethno-religious groups in the UK (Poole, 2006: 101–102).

This image is usually not fashioned through explicit statements. More often, space is given to negative reports, and little weight is attributed to non-Western sources. Furthermore, the way certain news stories are labeled reveals the interpretative logic governing media. A murder within a Muslim family is by routine labeled as honor killing, thereby giving culture and religion a prominent role (Strand Runsten, 2006: 200–201, 206). Individual crimes, as with killing, are described as something typical of the group and contribute to stereotypes (p. 209).

Two main circumstances make this research relevant: firstly, a possible alliance between neo-nationalist movements and conservative Christianity, and secondly presumed consequences of Islamophobic media discourse.

In the last 30 years, a new radical political right has emerged in Europe. The radical right is nationalist and populist, and suspicious towards Islam and Muslims (Mudde, 1999: 182, 185). The growth of the European radical Right accelerated in the 1980s (p. 182). Several new parties were founded, or created out of splits in established ones. In a few cases, entire established parties turned in a populist, right-wing direction (Mudde, 2011: 7). The importance of these parties has grown, although their growth has slowed down, and they now have a voting share of around 10 percent in 12 member states (p. 9).

For many years, this new radical right has only had minimal success in Sweden. The success of New Democracy in the early 1990s was based on two charismatic leaders. When they stepped down, the party was not re-elected to the parliament (Rydgren, 2005: 8, 75). The Sweden Democrats party was founded as early as 1988 and was at that time perceived as an almost neo-Nazi party with close ties to the movement Maintain Sweden Swedish (p. 118). The party was marginalized. About 10 years ago, it was taken over by a group of young leaders who wanted to create a more acceptable right-wing party that would attract 'welfare nostalgic' voters in Sweden (Hellström, 2010: 102–103). For years, this party had little success. In 2010, however, the Sweden Democrats gained seats in the national parliament and its electoral support is supposedly growing.

In Sweden, the growth and success of right-wing *Christian* movements is limited, with one exception; *Livets ord* in Uppsala. Moreover, the Christian right has not become a significant political force. Yet, I find it interesting studying an Islam and Muslim related discourse in these four media, in order to establish to what extent Christian conservative media adheres to a neo-nationalist or a liberal discourse. If *Dagen*, conservative and Evangelical, and *Världen idag*, fundamentalist charismatic, demonstrate a discursive consensus with *SD-Kuriren* with neo-Nazi roots, this might foreshadow an alliance between right-extremism and neo-conservative Christianity, especially since the Swedish Christian Democratic party is losing electoral support. There has been discussion on whether the Sweden Democrats would seize the role the Christian Democrats once had. Thus, a discursive consensus regarding Islam and Muslims might indicate that the Sweden Democrats might have an opportunity to gain ground among conservative Christians.

The second reason for conducting this research is consequentialistic. It is well established that the ability to control media language is a power position (Van Dijk, 1995: 19),

and if such language becomes hostile, it is even considered as violence (Galtung, 1990: 291). Lastly, media language has a particular impact in areas where its audience has limited first-hand knowledge (Poole and Richardson, 2006: 1), like the readership of Christian papers regarding Islam, and if the discourse becomes hegemonic. According to Edward Said (1997: xix, 25), an anti-Muslim and anti-Arab discourse has not only become mainstream, it has become 'the canonical, orthodox coverage of Islam ... and has been more diffused, has seemed more persuasive and influential, in the West than any other "coverage" or interpretation' (p. 169). He even claims that what can be said about Muslims cannot be said about any other group; it is the last acceptable form of denigration (pp. xii, xvi). In any case, since there seems to be some acceptance in the public sphere for anti-Muslim sentiments, Christian media attitudes might be important for its readership.

On a general level, academic literature suggests that violent discourse, such as Islamophobia, has three effects: first of all, it effects our ethics, and restructures value hierarchies (Kempf, 2010: 13), it 'preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural' (Galtung, 1990: 291). It 'makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong', it changes 'the moral color of an act', and it makes oppression legitimate (Galtung, 1990: 291). Truths, ethical considerations and individual rights become subordinate (Kempf, 2010: 13). Injustice, even war, becomes necessity and justified (Kempf, 2010: 15). Secondly, a hostile discourse tends to influence (Fairclough, 1993: 138; Winter Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999: 13), and even distort (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 13) the way we understand and interpret social reality. It makes reality opaque (Galtung, 1990: 291), and can blind us to existing oppression (p. 295).

Interestingly enough, discourse does not only *precede* or *pave the way* for violent behavior or oppressive structures. On the contrary, and this is the third effect, there is a stronger correlation between discrimination and oppressive language than the other way around. Thus, oppressive language has a system justification function; it legitimates *existing* social arrangements (Jost and Banaji, 1994: 2). This means that 'disadvantaged groups are stereotyped in ways that justify their social position' (Jones, 2002: 11), since people cannot endure political systems harming a person who seems like oneself, because it would arouse 'feelings of repentance and pain' (Sternberg and Sternberg, 2008: 45).

Method

This article is based on a descriptive comparative quantitative content analysis. Using such a method enables the results to reflect not only differences and similarities between the news products, but also to identify nuances in their respective languages (Landmann, 2008: 4–5).

The years under scrutiny, 2006 and 2007, were selected since they were years of intense conflict between Islamophobic groups in the West and Islamists. Furthermore the political effects of the Danish Mohammed caricatures were evident, resulting in demonstrations and economic boycotts against Denmark. In Sweden, the website of the Sweden Democrats was shut down for a short time after the party had published the caricatures.

Table 1. Selected editorials and political articles 2006–2007 (2006).

Dagens Nyheter, editorials	SD-kuriren, political articles		Dagen, editorials		Dagen, editorials	
Anonymous ¹	Richard Jomshof	23 (11)	Thomas Österberg	31 (11)	Mats Tunehag	100 (42)
	Mattias Karlsson	5 (1)	Birger Thureson	15 (15)	Ruben Agnarsson	13 (7)
	Björn Söder	3 (2)	Erika Cyrillus	11 (11)	Hans-Göran Björk	6 (6)
	Jimmy Åkesson	2 (1)	Elisabeth Sandlund	10 (1)	Carin Stenström	6 (5)
	Tony Wiklander	1 (1)	Håkan Arenius	5 (0)	Siewert Öholm	1 (0)
			Daniel Grahn	3 (3)	No signature	1 (0)
			Olof Djurfeldt	1 (0)		
(24%)	(40%)		(19%)		(21%)	
169(94)		34 (16)		76 (41)		127 (60)

¹Traditionally, editorials are anonymous and merely the voice of the newspaper, as in the case of *Dagens Nyheter*. The other publications publish names of their writers.

And finally, parliamentary elections were held both in Sweden and in the Palestinian territories, resulting in a more heated political climate.

Although a wide variety of news materials occur in newspapers and journals, only the most ideologically distinctive material were selected, explicitly reflecting the values of the media under scrutiny, i.e. *editorials*. Out of these editorials, I selected those that mentioned *Islam* and *Muslims*, Muslim organizations such as *Hamas*, Muslim terms such as *Sharia*, and Muslim individuals or ethnic groups with a Muslim majority.

In the case of *Dagens Nyheter* I selected only the lead editorials.⁵ In the period 2006–2007, *Dagens Nyheter* published 710 leaders (356 in 2006), of these 169 concerned Muslims and Islam (94 in 2006).

The previously mentioned selection criteria cannot be fully applied to *SD-Kuriren*. Instead the selection has been expanded, so that not only *editorials* are included but all articles written by any member of the Sweden Democratic party board. This decision was based on the number of editorials being extremely small in *SD-Kuriren* and therefore did not make sufficient material for analysis. Furthermore, the selected articles are so politically distinctive that a comparison with editorials seems relevant. In 2006 and 2007, eight issues of *SD-Kuriren* were published, and in these issues members of the party board wrote 84 articles. Out of these 84 political articles, 34 were selected, making 40 percent of all the political articles. Richard Jomshof was the most active writer.

Dagen published approximately 200 editorials a year, one per issue. Out of these, 76 editorials (41 in 2006) were selected. *Världen idag* published approximately 300

editorials a year, two in each issue. Based on the aforementioned criteria, 127 editorials were selected from the 2006–2007 issues (60 in 2006), which is approximately 21 per cent of all editorials.

Finally, in this study Robert M Entman's *framing analysis* functions both as an analytical and organizing tool of the study. According to Entman (1993: 52), framing

is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Typically frames diagnose, evaluate and prescribe.

Analytically, the study has developed and refined a method based upon Entman's keywords *diagnosing*, *evaluating* and *prescribing*, and likewise uses the same keywords to organize the study into three sections. In some sections, I develop more specific attendant operational questions.

The diagnoses

Editorials and ideological articles are usually spurred on by political problems. Success stories are rarely an inspiration. That problems characterize these articles is not necessarily a consequence of anti-Muslim attitudes per se. Nevertheless, a problem arises when European Muslims do not possess tools to articulate alternative public images. Statements might go unchallenged and contribute to an anti-Muslim discourse.

It is difficult to categorize editorials according to their diagnoses, sometimes there is more than one, and sometimes they are unclear. Still, the editorials are classified *inductively*, identifying the most pertinent diagnoses without predefined categories, the reason being that this makes the articles at this early stage appear open-ended and in their own right.

In the case of *Dagens Nyheter* (Table 2a), its most common diagnosis concerns national policies, domestic or foreign, of different states. Furthermore, *Dagens Nyheter* mainly uses a non-religious discourse. Religion is rarely described as the motivation for political actors. The same can be said about the other categories; whenever international conflicts, threats, and democracy are discussed, the role of religion is downplayed. Likewise, violence and political problems are dressed in a political language, not a religious one. Muslim actors are portrayed as politicians with a political, not a religious, agenda. This also holds true in the case of future Iranian nuclear capability (*Dagens Nyheter*, 16 January 2006).

In *Dagen* (Table 2b), the dominant category concerns *secularization* of Swedish society, particularly Swedish schools. In these cases, Muslims and Christians sometimes share the same challenge (Österberg, 30 November 2006), occasionally Muslims are used by anti-Christian actors with the aim of secularizing schools (Cyrillus, 22 August 2006; Österberg, 13 June 2006). But Muslim actors are never described as the central actor causing secularization.

Another major category concerns the relationship between Muslims and Christians or the Western world. In this category⁶ *threats* are present. However Islamism, not Islam, is

Table 2a. Diagnosis, the motive for editorials with a Muslim presence in *Dagen Nyheter* 2006–2007 (2006).

Diagnosis	Number
1 National policies	85 (47)
Swedish foreign and security policies	14 (7)
Swedish domestic policies	25 (14)
American Iraq policies	9 (5)
American foreign and security policies	10 (5)
American domestic policies	3 (1)
French foreign and security policies	1 (0)
French domestic policies	2 (0)
Russian foreign and security policies	3 (2)
Russian domestic policies	3 (3)
British domestic policies	3 (1)
Danish domestic policies	1 (0)
EU foreign and security policies	3 (3)
EU domestic policies	8 (6)
2 International conflicts	29 (13)
Balkan conflicts	6 (0)
Arab-Israeli conflicts	13 (8)
Darfur conflict	4 (2)
Iraqi conflict	4 (2)
Afghan conflict	2 (1)
3 Muslim threats	23 (16)
Iranian nuclear capability	7 (4)
Threats against Western democracy	11 (8)
Western defense of democracy and human rights	2 (2)
The collapse of Pakistan	1 (0)
Antisemitic threats	1 (1)
Threats against Swedish Muslims	1 (1)
4 Non-Muslim threats	9 (5)
Nuclear arms proliferation and arms race	7 (5)
Climate change	2 (0)
5 Democracy	8 (3)
Democracy in Pakistan	3 (0)
Democracy in Palestine	1 (1)
Democracy in Turkey	3 (1)
Elections in Iraq and Palestine	1 (1)
6 Remaining	15 (10)
TOTALS	169 (94)

defined as an inspiration for terrorism in Sweden (Thureson, 5 May 2006), and is said to be ‘advancing’ (Thureson, 8 June 2006) or responsible for terrorism in the UK (Österberg, 11 August 2006; Sandlund, 5 July 2007).

Table 2b. Diagnosis, the motive for editorials with a Muslim presence in *Dagen* 2006–2007 (2006).

Diagnosis	Number
1 Swedish policies	27 (18)
Secularization in Sweden	18 (14)
Attitudes towards Muslims in Sweden	4 (2)
Swedish immigration policies	3 (1)
Swedish defense policies	2 (1)
2 International conflicts and conditions	30 (15)
The relationship between Muslims and Christians or the western world	11 (6)
The Israeli–Palestinian conflict	10 (6)
The Iraq conflict	5 (2)
Poverty and conflicts in the third world	4 (1)
3 Democracy	7 (3)
Threats against freedom of expression	5 (2)
Islam and democracy	2 (1)
4 Human rights	4 (3)
Possession and proliferation of nuclear arms	2 (2)
Death penalty	2 (1)
5 Remaining	8 (2)
TOTALS	76 (41)

A third theme concerns the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In this period, the war between Hezbollah and Israel in summer 2006 was a central theme as well as the fact that Hamas won the Palestinian elections, in addition to the illness of Ariel Sharon. Problematic Arab actors are described as *individuals*, not as representatives of Arabs or Muslims in general. Still, Palestinian leaders are repeatedly described as causing the conflict; they fight each other (Cyrillus, 14 June 2006), Hamas refuse to recognize Israel (Österberg, 4 April 2007; Thureson 1 August 2006), with the pursuit of eradicating Israel (Thureson, 11 May 2006). On the other hand, the Palestinian population is described as longing for peace (Thureson, 11 May 2006).

In *Världen idag* (Table 2c), by far the most reoccurring theme concerns different Muslim *threats*, one kind being physical threats posed against the West. Islam allegedly threatened Denmark during the hot-headed demonstrations against *Jyllands-Posten*, the Danish paper that published the Mohammed caricatures (Tunehag, 2 January 2006). Furthermore, the life of a reporter at the Norwegian Christian paper, *Magazinet*, was threatened, and Hans-Göran Björk speculates whether this reveals the true face of Islam (Björk, 13 January 2006). The fact that the Danish embassy in Damascus was set on fire (Stenström, 6 February 2006) and that the leaders in Iran launched a nuclear program (Tunehag, 10 March 2006) are seen as additional physical threats against the West.

Likewise, Muslims allegedly threaten Western immaterial core values, such as religious freedom, democracy, and freedom of speech and expression. The existence of radical Muslims in Europe is one such threat (Tunehag, 31 January 2007). In one editorial,

Table 2c. Diagnosis, the motive for editorials with a Muslim presence in *Världen idag* 2006–2007 (2006).

Diagnosis	Number
1 Muslim threats, responses and consequences	57 (30)
Muslim threats	35 (17)
Muslim threats and Western/Swedish retreat	17 (10)
Muslim threats and Swedish foreign policy	1 (1)
Muslim threats and the behavior of the Swedish left	1 (1)
Muslim threats and democracy	3 (1)
2 Democracy and Islam	22 (7)
Islam's incompatibility to democracy	17 (7)
Islam, democracy and others	2 (0)
Islam's incompatibility to democracy and retreat	1 (0)
Children as subjects of Islamist propaganda	2 (0)
3 Swedish and Western policies and social change	21 (14)
Swedish foreign policies	7 (7)
Swedish and Western retreat	3 (2)
Media critique	3 (2)
The behavior of the Swedish left	1 (1)
Swedish foreign policy and mass media critique	1 (1)
Secularization	3 (1)
Hate crime	3 (0)
4 Remaining	27 (9)
TOTALS	127 (60)

The Islamic Republic of Sweden?, it is implied that British Muslims threaten democracy and support Sharia law (Tunehag, 8 March 2006), and in another one, that 'we' all might be forced to follow Islam (Tunehag, 13 February 2006).

A second theme appearing in some editorials is the *retreat* of various Western elites from important Christian or democratic values, particularly when facing a Muslim threat. This retreat is described in a typically populist vein. It is supposedly caused by Muslim immigration as well as ignorant and naïve Western elites fearing Muslim immigrants. A clear case is the excuse that Denmark's Prime Minister and the chief editor of *Jyllands-Posten* gave the Muslim world after publishing the Mohammed drawings. Allegedly, 'they' are now letting Islam rule a Scandinavian democracy (Björk, 3 February 2006). Not only is the political elite sounding the retreat, so also are 'ignorant secularists' and 'media' as well (Tunehag, 7 June 2006). 'They' allow self-censorship to gain ground, limiting the freedom of speech and expression, especially in issues related to Islam and homosexuality (Tunehag, 8 November 2006).

A third diagnosis concerns the perceived *incompatibility between Islam and democracy*. Islam is described as genuinely undemocratic. Muslim societies are supposedly unable to adopt democratic values (Tunehag, 27 February 2006). Tunehag calls democratic Islam a 'square circle': a contradiction in terms (Tunehag, 30 January 2006).

Table 2d. Diagnosis, the motive for editorials with a Muslim presence in *SD-Kuriren* 2006–2007 (2006).

Diagnosis	Number
1 Muslim threats	21 (12)
Muslim threats	11 (6)
Muslim threats and Western/Swedish retreat	7 (4)
Muslim threats and democracy	1 (1)
Muslim threats and remaining	2 (1)
2 Swedish policies	9 (2)
The treatment of SD by the Swedish political establishment	5 (0)
Western/Swedish retreat	2 (2)
Defining Swedishness	2 (0)
3 Remaining	4 (2)
TOTALS	34 (16)

The analysis of *SD-Kuriren* (Table 2d) establishes major rhetorical similarities with *Världen idag*, but also some differences. A shared feature is the alleged Muslim *threat* as a reoccurring theme. Threat is the dominating or one of two dominating problems in more than 60 percent of the selected political articles. This is a larger proportion than in *Världen idag*.

Unlike *Världen idag*, *SD-Kuriren* never claims that Islam as such is incompatible to democracy. However, just like *Världen idag*, *SD-Kuriren* dwells on the idea that Muslims in Europe constitute a threat to democracy. In 2006, Richard Jomshof describes the reactions against the publication of the Mohammed images as a threat and an assault on the free and democratic Denmark, enabled by Danish Muslims, labeled ‘fifth columnists’ (Jomshof, 67b, 2006). This expression reoccurs in an article by Björn Söder, who claims that Muslims conduct ‘fifth column activities’ (Söder, 67, 2006). Söder also refers to Pia Kjærsgaard, claiming that ‘there are strong Muslim forces that wish to curtail our democratic rights’ (Söder, 69, 2006).

Furthermore, the writers return to the idea that the Muslim threat is permanent and growing since ‘they’ are here, their number is growing and since ‘they’ assumedly are getting more radical. The Muslim group assumedly ‘grows increasingly fast’ through ‘mass immigration and high birth rates’ (Jomshof, 69a, 2006), and ‘will cause very big problems in the future’ (Jomshof, 69a, 2006) as they will demand ‘antidemocratic Sharia laws’, Muslim autonomy and segregation (Jomshof, 69d, 2006).

These problems are understood as permanent since cultures, in Richard Jomshof’s mindset, do not converge. The system with independent schools, furthermore, will contribute to the permanency of the problem, giving Muslims the opportunity to reproduce their culture and religion independently (Jomshof, 74b, 2007). Being an ardent supporter of Christian independent schools, *Världen idag* refrains from this critique.

Just as in *Världen idag*, also in *SD-Kuriren* Muslims are portrayed as violent and irrational. The threat they constitute is not merely a threat to democratic *ideas*, but they also supposedly constitute a real physical threat and a threat to law and order. In 2005, violent

riots took place in some of the suburbs of Paris and, in 2007, *SD-Kuriren* reported on riots in the Netherlands (Jomshof, 72b, 2007). Jomshof and Söder depict how Muslim youth in France constitute the basis of the problem and cause a situation described as the 'brink of civil war' (Jomshof and Söder, 67, 2006). In the same article it is also said that an 'Arab mob', without any rational reasons, assaulted passengers on a train in Nice. The authors also emphasize that this is not an isolated French threat, but also a Swedish and European one.

SD-Kuriren stresses that crime and sexual violence are yet another kind of Muslim threat and an outcome of Islam. In the mindset of *SD-Kuriren*, crime is not merely a social or legal issue if the perpetrator is Muslim. Crime is understood as part of a global war between the Muslim world and the West (Karlsson, 74, 2007; Karlsson, 68, 2006) and is seen as an outcome of Islamic attitudes, since 'Muslim violence against infidels to a large extent is based upon attitudes towards women, men, sex, and violence thriving in Muslim societies' (Jomshof, 74a, 2007).

Another reoccurring theme in *SD-Kuriren* is the *retreat* of Western elites. Herein lies *SD-Kuriren's* populist dimension, shared by *Världen idag*; voicing a mistrust of national elites and depicting them as ignorant and blind to massive threats posed by Islamic presence in the West. Moreover, a wide group of elites is criticized. One is artists. *SD-Kuriren* claims that the refusal of children's book illustrators' to make drawings of Mohammed was a retreat and the origin of the crisis (Jomshof, 67b, 2006). This was understood by *SD-Kuriren* as a symptom that Denmark voluntarily 'subjects' itself to 'Islamic censorship'. Likewise, Jomshof regards the refusal to accept Lars Vilks' participation in an exhibition in Karlstad in the summer 2007 (Jomshof, 73, 2007) as well as the closure of *SD-Kuriren's* website in 2006, probably under pressure from the foreign minister (Jomshof, 67a, 2006; Jomshof, 69b, 2006; Jomshof, 74c, 2007) as further symptoms of retreat.

Just as *Världen idag*, *SD-Kuriren* sometimes uses historical analogies, comparing contemporary actors to the ones in the 1930s and 40s. The Scandinavian media are described as appeasers (Wiklander, 67, 2006), and similarly, Dutch media allegedly 'suppress and belittle' the riots outside Utrecht (Jomshof, 72b, 2007). Furthermore, Swedish and British politicians are described as 'appeasers' against those Muslims who want to impose Sharia law (Jomshof, 68, 2006).

Evaluation of Muslims' moral character

The second phase in Entman's framing method concerns the moral evaluation of actors in a discourse. This extensive section is divided into subsections based on more specific attendant operational themes. The first section analyzes *explicit* claims regarding Muslims' moral character, and the second examines *implicit* ones.

Explicit descriptions of Muslims

In this analysis regarding explicit claims about Muslims and Islam, the *roles* Muslims are given in the articles will be analyzed; then attention will be given to the usage of *labels* and *complements*. Exploring the role Muslims play in relation to diagnoses in editorials, the extent to which Muslims are regarded as problem-makers, as possessing a passive, neutral, unclear role or described as problem-solvers, will be studied.

Table 3. The roles of Muslim actors in relation to the problems and diagnoses of the editorials (% and number).

	Muslim actor in <i>Dagens Nyheter</i> N=167	Muslim actor in <i>Dagen</i> N=76	Muslim actor in <i>Världen idag</i> N=127	Muslim actor in <i>SD-Kuriren</i> N=34
Rejected problem-maker	40 (67)	36 (27)	81 (103)	77 (30)
Passive, neutral or unclear role	77 (128)	70 (53)	38 (48)	15 (6)
Accepted problem-solver	7 (11)	14 (11)	9 (11)	8 (3)

News media differ greatly with respect to assignment of responsibilities. As Table 3 indicates, the four media can be divided into those where Muslim actors in general have a neutral, passive or unclear role, and those where Muslim actors in general have the role of rejected problem-makers. The reason for this difference is, in addition to ideological differences, the fact that Muslims are not in main focus in many of the editorials in *Dagen*, such as in articles on *secularization*. In the case of *Dagens Nyheter*, several articles focus on political structures and contexts, explaining a political problem, and tend to downplay the role of actors, including Muslim ones.

In *Världen idag*, as well as in *SD-Kuriren*, Muslims are repeatedly described as problem-makers. However, there is one difference; in the case of *Världen idag* Muslims relatively often also have a passive, neutral, or unclear role. The reason is that several articles in *Världen idag*, unlike *SD-Kuriren*, depict *different* Muslim actors in different roles, i.e. more than one kind of Muslim actor is depicted.

The analysis of the usage regarding *labels* denoting Muslims, deals with the *denotative* precision and *connotative* value of labels (Ottosen, 1995: 100). Combining negative connotations with vague denotations is an effective strategy for inciting prejudice.⁷

In this case, no major differences between the four media appear. All of them seem to consciously avoid dysphemisms, and other labels with negative connotations (Tables 4a–d). However, that does not mean that the usage of labels is identical, as a few qualitative examples might illustrate.

As in the other media, neutral or vague labels dominate in *Dagens Nyheter*. And furthermore, 46 percent of the labels denote ambiguity. Furthermore, the fact that the editorials have a secular language, also has implications for the use of labels depicting

Table 4a. Labels denoting Muslim actors in *Dagens Nyheter* 2006–2007 (% and number, N = 399).

		Denotation	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Connotation	Unequivocally positive	3 (10)	1 (3)
	Neutral or vague	44 (175)	36 (142)
	Unequivocally negative	8 (33)	9 (36)

Muslims – they are usually secular. Also in the ones with negative connotations, about 17 percent, *Dagens Nyheter* regularly avoids emphasizing their Muslim character. Regimes, governments, terrorists, presidents are *rarely* referred to as ‘Muslim’ regimes or a ‘Muslim’ government, and so on. Also when ‘fanatics’ are discussed, they are *not* referred to as ‘Muslim’, and also ‘extremists’ are referred to as ‘extremists on both sides’ (*Dagens Nyheter*, 7 February 2006).

The use of labels in *Dagen* resembles to a large extent that in *Dagens Nyheter*, particularly regarding the distribution of the labels in the different categories. But since *Dagen* is Evangelical, it has a tendency to have a more religious language, to Islamize labels designating Muslim actors, turning militant actors into ‘militant Muslims’ (Thureson, 1 February 2006) and regimes into ‘theocratic Arab countries’ (Cyrillus, 15 November 2006). This might be a bit surprising since *Dagen* tends to have a more benign outlook on Islam and Muslims in other respects.

Världen idag’s 127 editorials have 608 labels for Muslims, significantly more than *Dagens Nyheter* that publishes significantly more editorials. Of these labels, 13 percent fall into the category of labels with an unequivocally negative connotation (Table 4c), the

Table 4b. Labels denoting Muslim actors in *Dagen* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 222$).

		Denotation	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Connotation	Unequivocally positive	1 (3)	4 (9)
	Neutral or vague	35 (77)	47 (104)
	Unequivocally negative	5 (12)	8 (17)

Table 4c. Labels denoting Muslim actors in *Världen idag* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 608$).

		Denotation	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Connotation	Unequivocally positive	0.5 (3)	0.5 (3)
	Neutral or vague	39 (239)	46 (281)
	Unequivocally negative	5 (33)	8 (49)

Table 4d. Labels denoting Muslim actors in *SD-Kuriren* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 184$).

		Denotation	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Connotation	Unequivocally positive	7 (12)	1 (1)
	Neutral or vague	36 (67)	45 (83)
	Unequivocally negative	4 (7)	8 (14)

same proportion as *Dagen*. And labels with vague or neutral connotations dominate, as in other media. Labels with positive connotations are exceptionally rare.

Of the labels denoting Muslims, 54 percent denote *ambiguity*, 46 percent include terms combining an ambiguous denotation and a neutral or vague connotation such as 'Muslims', 'Islam', 'Muslims in our countries' or 'Muslim groups'.

Of course, the most problematic category is the one combining derogatory connotation with unspecific denotations, and here we find 'Islamic extremists' (Björk, 13 January 2006), 'this religion of violence' (Stenström, 6 February 2006), 'dangerous religion', (Stenström, 6 February 2006), 'the wolfs' (Björk, 8 May 2006), 'the terrorists' (Tunehag, 6 September 2006), and 'these bawlers' (Tunehag, 18 September 2006).

SD-Kuriren's use of labels is consistent with the other media (Table 4d). In 34 articles, 184 labels denoting Muslim actors have been found, 12 percent are classified as negative. This means that just as the other media, *SD-Kuriren* does not allow labels with negative connotations to dominate. Likewise, vague or neutral labels dominate the editorials in *SD-Kuriren*.

In all the publications except *Dagens Nyheter*, there is a tendency to ambiguity. In *SD-Kuriren* 54 percent of the labels denoting Muslims are ambiguous, possibly indicating that the writers generalize to some extent, but avoid using negatively charged labels. The dominant category is labels combining an ambiguous denotation with a neutral or vague connotation, such as 'Muslims' (Jomshof, 67a, 2006; Jomshof, 72b, 2007; Jomshof, 74b, 2007), 'increasingly more Muslims' (Jomshof, 67a, 2006; Jomshof, 69a), 'strong Muslim forces' (Söder, 67, 2006), and 'Islam' (Söder, 67, 2006; Söder, 69, 2006; Jomshof, 72a, 2007).

The most ethically problematic labels, those combining a denotative ambiguity with negative connotation, represents 8 percent of the total. In the case of *Världen idag*, many of these labels were *clear* dysphemisms. In *SD-Kuriren* all the dysphemisms are borderline cases, less malicious forms of dysphemisms, such as 'a too large Muslim population in Sweden' (Jomshof, 69a, 2006; Jomshof, 74b, 2007), 'Muslim fundamentalists' (Jomshof, 74b, 2007) and the 'alleged moderate Muslims' (Karlsson, 72b, 2007).

All in all, this implies that the four media in many ways coincide in the use of labels as an instrument for describing Muslims; although the labels are ambiguous, they are considerably more vulgar in the case of *Världen idag*.

In the scrutiny of explicit descriptions of *Muslims*, we have now come to *complements*, i.e. the clause element describing what Muslims *are*, what they *are not* and so on. Such statements are divided into six categories, into those making clear positive statements, neutral or vague statements, and complements making unequivocally negative statements. Moreover, the statements are divided along another dimension concerning the denotative clarity of the subjects in the clauses. Of course, the most malicious clause combines an ambiguous actor with a negative complement.

In this case, the four media fall into two categories; those where *neutral* or *vague* complements dominate (*Dagens Nyheter* and *Dagen*) and those where *negative* ones dominate (*Världen idag* and *SD-Kuriren*) (see Table 5a). Furthermore, *Dagens Nyheter's* complements express secular and political conditions, also when terrorism is described. For instance 'the terrorist is a dangerous and unpredictable enemy' (*Dagens Nyheter*, 11 August 2006). In addition, as an effect of the secular discourse in this newspaper, the

subjects in the sentences, although defined as Muslim, are of a secular and very neutral character, like countries, politicians, organizations, and so on.

Dagen resembles *Dagens Nyheter* in its usage of Muslim complements; neutral and vague ones dominate (see Table 5b). And furthermore, although *Dagen* has more of a religious language, it does not affect its usage of complements. Both its subjects and the complements are dominated by secular terms. The religious subjects that do exist are predominantly positive or in some cases neutral, such as 'moderate Muslims are an overwhelming majority in our country' (Thureson, 17 May 2006). Finally, sentences with negative complements usually describe corrupt politicians and organizations.

Världen idag complements are more frequent, and there is a clear tendency towards negative statements (see Table 5c). In 62 percent of the clauses, its writers make unequivocally negative statements. Merely 6 percent of the complements are positive. However, a qualitative scrutiny of these six cases reveals that not even these statements

Table 5a. The use of complements describing Muslims in *Dagens Nyheter* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 101$).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Complements	Unequivocally positive	8 (8)	5 (5)
	Neutral or vague	21 (21)	28 (28)
	Unequivocally negative	18 (18)	21 (21)

Table 5b. The use of complements describing Muslims in *Dagen* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 34$).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Complements	Unequivocally positive	12 (4)	3 (1)
	Neutral or vague	24 (8)	35 (12)
	Unequivocally negative	18 (6)	9 (3)

Table 5c. The use of complements describing Muslims in *Världen idag* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 104$).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Complements	Unequivocally positive	1 (1)	5 (5)
	Neutral or vague	19 (20)	13 (14)
	Unequivocally negative	33 (34)	29 (30)

Table 5d. The use of complements in descriptions of Muslims in *SD-Kuriren* 2006–2007 (% and number, N = 51).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
Complements	Unequivocally positive	2 (1)	0 (0)
	Neutral or vague	22 (11)	18 (9)
	Unequivocally negative	12 (6)	47 (24)

are affirmative. The confirmatory complements are in some cases contrasted with a ‘but’ devaluating the impression. For instance ‘Muslims are part of Swedish society, but we cannot accept measures that will create “the Islamic republic of Sweden”’ (Tunehag, 8 March 2006).

The 34 cases with vague or neutral complements are very simple and concrete statements. The most malicious sentences, i.e. those 30 cases combining depreciative complements and ambiguously labeled actors, are sometimes truly hostile, such as ‘Islam is a dangerous religion, a direct threat to the free world’ (Stenström, 6 February 2006).

In *SD-Kuriren*, 51 clauses with a complement are found (Table 5d). Of these complements, 30 (59%) are defined as negative. In *SD-Kuriren* one single clause with a positive complement can be found, and this one is no irony. Here the writer and debater Dilsa Demirbag-Sten is described in genuinely positive manner, ‘talented’, and is portrayed as a role model for other immigrants (Wiklander, 67, 2006). The number of neutral complements is comparatively high (40%).

The most malicious category, where unequivocally negative complements are combined with ambiguous subjects, is prevalent in *SD-Kuriren*. More or less half of the complements are negative with a wide reference. In an article from 2006, Richard Jomshof claims that Muslims ‘have become more radical’, ‘were willing to resort to physical violence’ and ‘such actions show clearly how dangerous Islam as a religion is’ (Jomshof, 69a, 2006).

Implicit descriptions of Muslims

Presumably, debaters and writers avoid making *explicit* claims and assaults. Therefore, in this section, another linguistic layer will be considered, studying *implicit* moral assessment of Muslims. Here allegedly Muslim *behavior* will be analyzed. However, analyzing verbs alone is not sufficient since they do not reveal the moral character of behavior alone. In order to reveal this, the inclusion of a direct object and in some cases the adverb depicting *how* something is done is required. All in all, this section examines the moral standard of behavior attributed to Muslim actors by analyzing *verbs*, *direct objects* and *adverbs*.

Also in this case we can see a striking resemblance between *SD-Kuriren* and *Världen idag* (Table 6c–6d). These two media repeatedly relate morally questionable behavior to ambiguous Muslim actors, making Muslims in general responsible. This linguistic technique is one where Muslims most consistently are depicted in negative terms.

Dagens Nyheter connects Muslim actors to negative behavior in 42 percent of the cases (see Table 6a), but more often with a well-defined actor, making individual leaders or organizations responsible, not Muslims in general. However, in 15 percent of the cases, ambiguous actors are connected to negative behavior, particularly in the heated Mohammed caricature debate, in statements like 'Muslims all over the world demand respect from Denmark' (*Dagens Nyheter*, 11 January 2006).

The editorials in *Dagen* are slightly different in one important aspect. Although *Dagen* also associates Muslim actors with morally dubious behavior, this is done less frequently. In 13 percent of the cases furthermore, wide categories of Muslims are made responsible for negative behavior, which in comparison to other media is relatively few cases. Moreover, negative behavior is more often associated with well-defined actors (Table 6b).

Furthermore, the editorials in *Dagen*, just as *Dagens Nyheter*, occasionally describe behavior attributed to Muslim actors as commendable. However, the context of these cases reveals that not all of these cases are truly commendable. For instance, Hamas is said to have come into office democratically, but is at the same time defined as a terrorist organization (Thureson, 8 June 2006). Yet, in some cases, Muslim behavior is said to be very ethically acceptable; Swedish Muslim representatives are said to support Christian values in the educational system (Österberg, 30 November 2006) and Arab states criticize Hamas' policies (Thureson, 18 July 2006).

The two remaining media products are drastically different. *Världen idag* frequently makes Muslim actors accountable for morally questionable behavior (Table 6c); 65 percent of Muslim behavior is morally doubtful; merely 7 percent is morally acceptable. 28 percent of the depicted behavior is morally vague or neutral.

Furthermore, morally negative behavior is repeatedly combined with ambiguous subject labels, making an undefined and large Muslim group responsible for the behavior in

Table 6a. The behavior of Muslim actors in *Dagens Nyheter* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 365$).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
The moral character of the behavior	Unequivocally positive	7 (26)	3 (12)
	Connotation: neutral or vague	27 (100)	20 (73)
	Unequivocally negative	27 (99)	15 (55)

Table 6b. The behavior of Muslim actors in *Dagen* 2006–2007 (% and number, $N = 219$).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
The moral character of the behavior	Unequivocally positive	7 (16)	6 (14)
	Connotation: neutral or vague	23 (50)	27 (60)
	Unequivocally negative	23 (51)	13 (28)

question. The two most common behaviors attributed to Muslims are ‘murder’ and ‘demand’. During the observation period, Muslims ‘murder’ more than 20 times. This excludes the following clauses, which have been omitted: ‘carried out mass murder’ (Tunehag, 13 December 2006), ‘carry out their murderous misdeeds’ (Tunehag, 4 September 2006), ‘engaged in mass murder’ (Tunehag, 13 September 2006) or ‘encourage children to murder Jews’ (Tunehag, 22 February 2006). Secondly, Muslims ‘demand’, and their demands are unjust, directed towards the West and part of a zero-sum game. Everything ‘they’ demand is at ‘our’ expense.

SD-Kuriren, lastly, contained 219 clauses describing Muslim behavior (Table 6d). Basically *SD-Kuriren* uses the same linguistic strategy as *Världen idag*, perhaps somewhat harsher: 69 percent of alleged Muslim behavior is categorized as negative; 30 percent of Muslim behavior is categorized as morally neutral or ethically unclear.

In the case of *SD-Kuriren* the most common behavior ascribed to Muslims is that they ‘mean’ (14 cases) and ‘participate’ (nine cases). ‘Mean’ has more or less the same function as ‘demand’ in the case of *Världen idag*, indicating unjust attitudes, such as Muslims ‘mean’ that the Swedish society should adapt to them (Jomshof, 69d, 2006).

Prescriptions and solutions

Entman’s framing analysis implies that frames are also revealed in suggested *solutions* to vital problems. Accordingly, different solutions, put forward in the articles, will be analyzed; more specifically, to what extent the solutions are of a *problem-solving* kind or based on *critical theory* calling for *reform* and *emancipation*. A problem-solving theory does not believe in fundamental changes to societal structures, but ‘takes the world as it

Table 6c. The behavior of Muslim actors in *Världen idag* 2006–2007 (% and number, N = 706).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
The moral character of the behavior	Unequivocally positive	4 (29)	3 (18)
	Connotation: neutral or vague	13 (94)	15 (104)
	Unequivocally negative	31 (220)	34 (241)

Table 6d. The behavior of Muslim actors in *SD-Kuriren* 2006–2007 (% and number, N = 219).

		Denotation of subject label	
		Unequivocal	Ambiguous
The moral character of the behavior	Unequivocally positive	1 (2)	0.5 (1)
	Connotation: neutral or vague	15 (32)	15 (33)
	Unequivocally negative	25 (55)	44 (96)

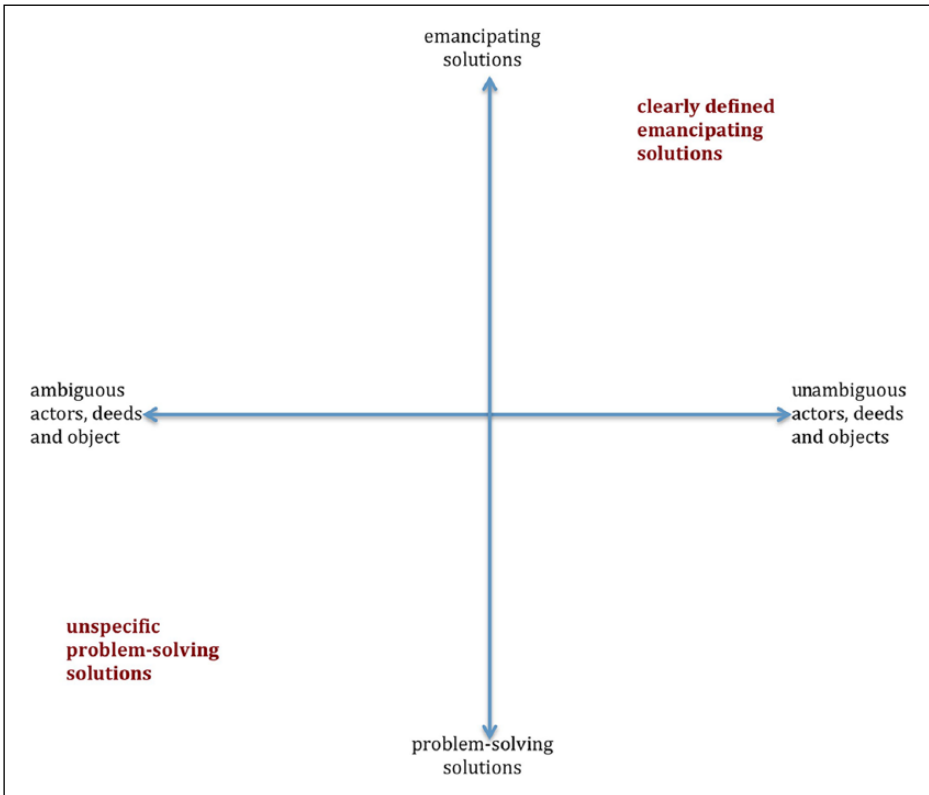


Figure 1. Categorization of prescriptions and solutions.

finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action' and only tries to 'make these relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with a particular source of trouble' (Cox, 1981: 128–129). Critical theory, on the other hand, 'does not take social and power relations for granted but calls them into question' (p. 129). Thus a problem-solving theory in a Huntingtonian vein, does not believe that relations between 'civilizations' can change fundamentally, merely individual issues can be addressed using deterrence or containment policies. Since critical theory believes that a new social and political order *is* possible given that social orders are not given but dynamic, it would suggest solutions that would change fundamental political and social structures are feasible, giving inter-civilization relations new possibilities.

Furthermore, the *precision* of suggested solutions will also be evaluated; to what extent it is clear *who* the actor is, the character of the *measure* to be undertaken, and who the *object* of those measures is. These two discussions equal two dimensions in the current analysis, creating four possible categories (Figure 1). It is reasonable to argue that non-specific problem-solving solutions are ethically more problematic than clearly defined emancipating ones.

Table 7. Categorization of prescriptions and solutions in editorials, 2006–2007 (% and number).

	Solutions in <i>Dagens Nyheter</i> (N = 23)	Solutions in <i>Dagen</i> (N = 30)	Solutions in <i>Världen idag</i> (N = 57)	Solutions in <i>SD-Kuriren</i> (N = 21)
Articles without explicit prescriptions	30 (7)	37 (11)	58 (33)	48 (10)
Emancipating solutions and unambiguous actors, deeds and objects	17 (4)	23 (7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Emancipating solutions and ambiguous actors, deeds and objects	0 (0)	13 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Problem-solving solutions and unambiguous actors, deeds and objects	43 (10)	20 (6)	21 (12)	33 (7)
Problem-solving solutions and ambiguous actors, deeds and objects	9 (2)	7 (2)	21 (12)	19 (4)

In some editorials and political articles, the solutions do not really concern Muslims. Muslims are not the principal objects of political measures, and therefore solutions in these items do not reflect political attitudes to Muslims, and cannot be classified. However, in items that concern alleged Muslim threats, Muslims are usually the object of suggested political measures and reveal attitudes to Muslims. Consequently, in the case of *Dagens Nyheter*, *Världen idag* and *SD-Kuriren*, editorials and political articles on Muslim *threats* (Tables 2a, 2c and 2d) will be analyzed, since they reveal whether the writers advocate problem-solving or emancipatory solutions. In the case of *Dagen*, another selection had to be undertaken: articles concerning ‘attitudes to Muslims in Sweden’, ‘the relationship between Muslims and Christians or the Western world’, ‘the Israeli-Palestinian conflict’, and ‘threats against freedom of expression’ (Table 2b) have been selected since they represent a conflictual relationship.

As Table 7 indicates, the analysis reveals *three* important results. Firstly, all media products repeatedly *avoid* making explicit prescriptions. Yet, in many of these articles, the ideology of the media is clear, and can tacitly imply a solution. Even so, they have been excluded. Secondly, the rift between *Dagens Nyheter* and *Dagen* on one side, and *SD-Kuriren* and *Världen idag* on the other, reoccurs. In *SD-Kuriren* and *Världen idag* no articles with emancipating solutions occur. *Dagen*’s solutions, on the other hand, are more often precise and emancipatory. Even in editorials concerning conflicts between the Western and Muslim world, an attitude of reform and emancipation is present. One editorial about the policies of the Swedish Secret Police and religious extremism illustrates this emancipatory attitude; Thomas Österberg seems to believe that fundamental attitudinal changes in the population are possible as well as required and thus proposes an ‘adamant work for an integration of Muslim immigrants in Sweden ...’ (Österberg, 26 January 2006) is required in order to solve terrorist threats. Likewise *Dagens Nyheter* claims that it is vital to make all citizens deeply rooted in democratic values, to ‘anchor the values of the open society in everyone living in Denmark’ (*Dagens Nyheter*, 11 January 2006).

However, also in *Dagen*, solutions of a problem-solving kind appear. In spring 2006, three young men planned a terror attack against *Livets Ord* in Uppsala. In this case,

Thureson is clearly suggesting solutions based on a problem-solving logic (Thureson, 5 May 2006), stating that 'those who want to frustrate democratic work and replace it with the tools of violence are not harmless for our society' and 'to cuddle up with violence implies undermining democracy' and furthermore 'Islamophobia is not fought best with blinkers on'.

As previously stated, *SD-Kuriren* and *Världen idag* clearly deviate since they *never* suggest emancipating solutions. Furthermore, the suggested measures are comparatively often *imprecise*; it is not stated *who* is going to act, the *measures* are not clearly defined and based on problem-solving theory. There is no request for readers to understand Muslims or Islam, or to establish a constructive relationship with Muslims. On the contrary, readers are encouraged to dissociate themselves from this group, and it is urgent to deter them from further aggression, to regain control over Western areas from Muslim influence, and to explicitly express dissatisfaction with policies in Muslim countries.⁸

By far the most common linguistic tool used in *Världen idag*, making the solutions imprecise, is the use of *implied prescriptions* (Ejvegård, 2005: 29) such as *expressive exclamations* (pp. 26–27). Björk, following death threats against a Norwegian journalist, stated that 'strong measures are required against all kinds of religion that wish to silence a democracy with violence and threats, and to take over society' (Björk, 13 January 2006). Björk clearly underlines the magnitude of the Muslim threat and implicitly calls for 'strong measures' without clarifying what *kind of measures* are necessary or *who* will carry them out. Agnarsson pursues the same method in an article where Muslims are defined as hatred incarnated that 'must be fought on many levels' (Agnarsson, 27 January 2006) and concludes that 'our modern history teaches us that we need to be on our guard.'

In the editorial *A Coordinated Defence is Required*, Stenström calls Islam a 'religion of violence' (Stenström, 6 February 2006), and poses numerous *rhetorical questions*. She asks 'How can we continue to show tolerance and openness and at the same time defend ourselves against those who apparently do not?'; 'How can we defend democracy and human rights against those who despise democracy and freedom?'; 'How can we master and overcome hatred and violence when there are major groups that advocate violence?'; and 'How can we safeguard our culture and fundamental values?' I find Stenström's linguistic strategy intriguing. 'We' are facing difficult dilemmas and, as Islam is described essentially as a 'religion of violence', there is no ethical solution. Using these rhetorical questions, Stenström provokes the reader to find solutions of a problem-solving kind. Later, Stenström draws her own conclusions: 'European countries with major Muslim populations ... must ... prepare a strategy for the future. ... The civilized world must brace itself for a united resistance to this dangerous madness' (Stenström, 6 February 2006).

SD-Kuriren's rhetoric on solutions to Muslim issues resembles that in *Världen idag*; the solutions tend to be problem-solving and in some cases imprecise. Without explaining who is supposed to act, or what kind of actions should be undertaken, Richard Jomshof makes an implicit prescription: 'Just as the democratic world took the fight against Nazism in the 1930s – and 40s, we must now take the fight against the Islamists' (Jomshof, 67b, 2006). This sentence is repeated in three additional articles in 2006 and 2007 (Jomshof, 69c, 2006; Jomshof, 69d; Jomshof, 74b, 2007), the last time adding 'it is

now time not merely to react, but also to act.’ Furthermore, *SD-Kuriren* also deems it hard for Muslims to live in harmony with the rest of the population. Reform is not an option. After riots in Europe in summer 2006, Jomshof and Söder claim in a problem-solving vein, that ‘in order to prevent similar incidents in Sweden, we must sharply limit immigration whilst making many of the unassimilated immigrants already here to go back to their home countries or to adapt to Swedish society’ (Jomshof and Söder, 67, 2006).

A third result concerns the relatively high prevalence of problem-solving solutions in *Dagens Nyheter*. This requires some comments though. First of all, these solutions generally concern Iran’s nuclear program. Secondly, the solutions are unambiguous. The target is the Iranian regime, and the actors as well as the measures are well defined. The paper suggests boycotts (*Dagens Nyheter*, 16 January 2006), or travel bans for Iranian officials (*Dagens Nyheter*, 26 February 2007). And lastly, the target of these measures, the Iranian regime, is defined as an immoral *political* actor, never as a Muslim one.

Conclusions

It is clear that a rift does appear in the Swedish media landscape regarding descriptions of Muslims and Islam. However, this rift does not appear between conservative Swedish Christian media on the one side and secular ones, on the other. Instead, the rift divides Christian as well as secular media. Liberal *Dagens Nyheter* and conservative and Evangelical *Dagen* avoid describing Muslims and Islam as a threat and usually seek constructive solutions to different challenges. *Dagen* also sees Christians as well as Muslims as victims of the forces of secularization. *Dagens Nyheter*, moreover, describes conflicts between Muslim and Christian actors in political, not religious, terms. Furthermore, a common ground appears between the neo-nationalist journal *SD-Kuriren* and fundamentalist charismatic *Världen idag*. These two media repeatedly make generalizing assertions, and describe Islam and Muslims as violent, irrational, making unacceptable demands at ‘our’ expense, and as a danger and threat to Christians, and to the Western world, primarily, its democracy. Furthermore Western leaders are in typically populist vein allegedly submissive to Muslim demands and retreating. *Världen idag*, unlike *SD-Kuriren*, additionally claims that Islam is permanently inconsistent with democracy. Whether this actually portends a possible alliance between neo-nationalist movements and conservative Christianity could be a starting point for future research.

Notes

1. *Dagens Nyheter*, founded in 1864, is the largest morning newspaper in Sweden with a week-day circulation of 285,000 and 330,000 on Sundays. It is regarded as an independent Liberal paper and an important leader of public opinion in Sweden since the Second World War.
2. *SD-Kuriren* is a periodical with four annual issues and was founded in 1991 as the official organ for the Sweden Democrats. It has a circulation of about 28,000. Occasionally it is accessible on the internet.
3. The leader of the Pentecostal movement founded *Dagen* in 1945. Currently the paper has 18,000 subscribers, is Norwegian owned and is regarded as Evangelical or ecumenical.

4. *Världen idag* was founded in 2001 and currently has about 6,600 subscribers. The newspaper is part of the faith movement and the Swedish Christian right.
5. That is, lead editorials, henceforth called 'editorials'.
6. Threat is also present in articles concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in the ones concerning possession and proliferation of nuclear arms.
7. The concept of connotation is complicated. There is no impartial word list naming all dysphemisms and euphemisms. What is a disparaging label depends on the context (Ejvegård, 2005: 16). If there is reason to believe that a writer has the intention of speaking in a derogatory manner, to vulgarize, or to describe someone as offensive, then the term is disparaging, particularly if we believe that the audience understands the terms in question in the same way.
8. Some editorials deviate, as the writers turn to an imagined Muslim audience (Tunehag, 18 September 2006) and to Swedish politicians (Björk, 11 August 2006).

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