

Introduction

Can the media circulate any image in the public sphere by invoking free speech? Are there no potentially offensive images that should be regulated or avoided, or even banned? Where should the limits to free speech be placed in the specific field of publicising images? The laws governing images of public interest, especially those regarding religion, cultures and the activities of politicians, go to make up one of the most controversial and complex issues in the world of global communication.

The controversy that arose on the publication in Denmark of the Mohammed cartoons continues to generate debate and concern. On the other hand, at a local level, television and Internet exploit political satire to the maximum. The aim of the *Quaderns del CAC* is to highlight the difficult relationship between "Image and the right to ridicule", borrowing the apt expression of legal philosopher Ronald Dworkin. This collection of articles focuses on the two areas mentioned: an analysis and reflection of the crisis of the Mohammed cartoons after two years, and a partial map of political ridicule on television in essentially European contexts.

Victòria Camps starts this edition with the article "Offence and free speech" and places the problem within the context of the ethics of responsibility. The first block of this edition is made up of four articles on the effects of the Mohammed images: Daniel Gamper Sachse reminds us of the origins of the controversy ("Free speech in tolerant society: the case of the Mohammed cartoons"); Alain Blomart investigates the effect in Europe and the Mediterranean ("The crisis of the Mohammed cartoons in the European Union and the Mediterranean: contexts, reactions and media"); José María Perceval provides us with the opposite view ("Between humour and uproar: satire and vision of the west in the media of the Arab-Muslim world"); and Mustafa Hussain dissects the debate in Denmark ("The controversy of the Mohammed cartoons and the media in Denmark"). The second block is dedicated to an analysis of political ridicule on television and includes the case studies by Jordi Balló ("The fiction of the mask: the case of *Polònia* in Catalonia"), by José Luis Valhondo ("Infosatire and democratisation on television: the Spanish case"), by Rossend Domènech ("Political satire in Italy: a successful television genre"), by Gemma Casadevall ("Political satire in Germany: from the political *Kabarett* of the thirties to Comedy TV") and by Vicent Partal ("*West Wing* or *Left Wing*? The pedagogy of politics in the masterly series of the United States"). Laura Díez Bueso closes the edition with a general legal study ("Free speech and its limits"). As a complement, we should also note the selection of websites related to this edition in the subsection "Journal of websites".

Finally, the section entitled "Observatory" includes three collaborations of great interest: Fiona Macmillan argues "The dysfunctional relationship between copyright and cultural diversity"; Carlos Scolari, Héctor Navarro, Hugo Pardo and Josep Lluís Micó summarise the study entitled "The new professional profiles and multiskilling of journalists in Catalonia"; and Mònika Jiménez presents "TV programming for consumers in miniature: advertising for young children that speaks the language of adults".

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