

The Muhammad Cartoon Controversy in New Zealand Newspapers

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Abstract : This study examines the construction of the controversy surrounding the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, as it appeared in three New Zealand newspapers; the Otago Daily Times (ODT), the New Zealand Herald (NZH) and the Press. It discursively argues that these mainstream newspapers promote the Orientalist perception of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West in their news frame, but, in most cases, the perceived clash was not apparent in editorials. This study also argues that the uniformity in news frame conflicts with editorials' construction of the issue. Furthermore, while the construction of the issue in news frame and editorials in the Press remained similar, the other two newspapers—the ODT and NZH—both contradict their own news frame in their editorials and contradict the editorials appearing in the Press.

Keywords : clash of culture, discourse, Islam, media agenda, New Zealand, orientalism, the West

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