

**The Positive Branding of Islam:
A Case Study of Islamic countries their Public Diplomacy Efforts and Effectiveness**

Angelic Alihusain-del Castilho

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a vertical line, positioned above the printed name.

Angelic Alihusain-del Castilho
31 January 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

This thesis examines if any attempts are made by the Muslim world to address the current negative image of Islam using public diplomacy (PD) and if these efforts are effective and successful. It is the aim of this research to show that the correct use of PD can result in a positive improvement of the image of Islam.

The first chapter provides an overview of issues and factors influencing the current relationship between the Muslim and the Western world. The second , third and fourth chapter provide a profile of the countries studied, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Malaysia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Senegal, focusing on PD efforts to change the current image of Islam. Efforts are compared, analyzed on impact on the existing image in the West.

It concludes that all four countries are involved in efforts to change the image of Islam through PD, however a non-supportive domestic situation, lack of understanding of the culture in the West as well as a lack of unified coordination challenge the success of these efforts. The thesis concludes with the firm belief that public diplomacy can make a difference in the image of Islam.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNN	Central News Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community Of West African States
EU	European Union
G-11	Group of Eleven
G-77	The Group of 77
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDFR	Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations Malaysia
IFDT	International Forum on Diplomatic Training
IOC	The International Olympic Committee
JID	Jordan Institute of Diplomacy
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PD	Public Diplomacy
SAMIRAD	Saudi Arabia Market Information Resource
SPA	Saudi Press Agency
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WCS	World Conservation Strategy
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Since wars begin in the minds of men,

It is in the minds of men, that the defenses of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO, 1995)

The objectives

Many, especially Westerners, associate Islam with terrorism and radicalism on the one hand while on the other hand Muslims feel as if the world is waging war on Islam and completely misunderstands Islam. In the 'Western world' Muslims suffer from this stigmatizing and Muslim countries have to deal with a negative and severely tarnished image. The events of September 11 in 2001, caused this stereotyping to climax and resulted in the 'war on terror' led by the USA.

Different surveys, as conducted by the Gallup Poll and Pew Research Center (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007; 2009), show that Muslims want this negative image to be changed. This would not only be to their benefit since improved understanding of and respect for the cultural differences would certainly benefit efforts for peace on a global, regional, and local scale.

Public Diplomacy (PD) and country branding techniques are used by countries worldwide to improve their image and in doing so improve their status and influence on a global scale.

Public diplomacy could be used to bridge cultural differences (Melissen, 2007). The question is, “do Islamic countries, who are obviously targets of other countries’ PD messages, see a need for the use of PD to counteract the negative stereotyping and image, whether through an explicit PD program or through a more implicit one” (Datta, 2009).

I will try to find an answer to this question by studying four countries that are representative for the Islamic world. These countries are the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and the Republic of Senegal. I will start by reviewing the history of the relations between the Muslim world and the Western World in order to understand why the world is where it is today. Then I will create a profile of the aforementioned countries paying special attention to their foreign relations, diplomacy, and the tools and methods used that fit in the category of PD. I will try to identify if their PD-policy has a special focus for image improvement in general and/or related to Islam.

In the final chapter, all examples of PD related efforts for improving the image of Islam are analyzed on their rate of success. The conclusion of the thesis will involve the ideas and/or suggestions for (improved) PD as a tool for the improvement of the image of these Islamic countries.

The method

The research method involves different resources. Through literature study, a solid idea of the history of and actual situation in the Muslim world in general, and in the studied countries specifically, will be determined.

Second, a study is made of the news as published on the internet and presented in newspapers worldwide and as seen on international broadcasting networks. This for a good and practical understanding of what and how PD initiatives are presented. The reactions available to these initiatives help in the interpretation of the successfulness of the message.

Finally, a simple survey is done (103 respondents worldwide) and the outcome is used as a reconfirmation of facts already derived from the information acquired through internet research and literature study. The conclusions are not based on the survey outcomes; however, it does provide some added information for further study.

Overview

In this Introduction, I will discuss some of the most important issues and factors that are of significance in the current tension between the Muslim and the Western world.

The central issue is the interpretation and experience of the religion of Islam by Muslims and non-Muslims. Through a brief description, I will try to provide a basic idea of the foundations and meaning of this religion.

Another important aspect is the history of the relations between the Muslim and non-Muslim world. It is important to recognize the impact the first encounters had, how this developed over time, resulting in some of the current misunderstandings. I will briefly touch on PD and its applications in general and especially with reference to the current public relations horror for the Muslim world.

Since a considerable part of the image problem is linked to the aspects of terrorism, I will briefly touch on terrorism and its relationship with the Muslim community. This will include the reactions of the Islamic community to terrorism as well as to the stereotyping resulting from it. I will include some examples from influential Islamic countries or groupings on their reactions to terrorism and stereotyping. Next, I will present the options I believe the Muslim world has when it comes to the use of PD. What role do institutions such as Al Jazeera play and what tools are available to these countries.

Islam and its importance

Islam came to the world in the year 610, by the first revelation made to Muhammad. His first follower was his wife Khadija (Aslan, 2006). The religion was from the beginning the religion for the oppressed and poor. What started out as a religion with many similarities to Judaism and Christianity, became more than a religion (a social project) when Muhammad fled Mecca and went to Medina, where he became the spiritual and administrative leader of the community (Ansary, 2009).

After Muhammad his death, his succession caused the first tensions between Muslims and for centuries to come those tensions remained and some even grew deeper. Nowadays there are different Islamic groups with the same basic Islamic belief but with differing views on the interpretation of the Holy Qur'an and other religious events. The Muslim empire also grew exponentially after Muhammad's death and it was then that some parts of Europe for a while belonged to this grand empire. Now Islam is the second biggest religion in the world.

The foundations in Islam

The belief in one God (Allah) and Muhammad being his messenger are central to the Islamic faith. Out of respect for God and him, Muslims do not picture God or Muhammad or make any statues symbolizing them. The Holy Qur'an was written after Muhammad his death. Next

to the Holy Qur'an, Muslims also know the Hadith, which are writings based on testimony by the inner circle of Muhammad about what he would have said in certain situations. The five pillars of the religion are Prayer (*Salah*), Alms (*Zakat*), Fasting (*Saum*), Pilgrimage (*Hadj*), Confessions of faith (*Shadada*) (Aslan, 2009).

In the world, there are 1.57 billion Muslims according to the most recent survey of the Pew Forum on religion and public life. Sixty percent of the Muslims live in Asia and 20% in the Middle East and North Africa. Twenty percent of the Muslim population lives in non-Muslim countries. In Europe alone, there are around 38 million Muslims, amounting to 5% of its total population. Of the 4.6 million Muslims in the Americas, more than 50% live in the USA (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2009).

From the beginning, the Islamic society was characterized by strong commitment to the faith and aggressive defense against attacks. After Muhammad's death in the year 632, Khalifa's (religious leaders), Imams, and other religious scholars played an important role in the community and even today, there still exists the Ulema¹ in many Islamic countries. The Islamic society's main characteristic is that from early on it was a group oriented community and not an individualistic community. Religion was not separated from politics or from the judiciary.

As I already mentioned early on there were divisions within the Islamic community, leading to different branches of the same tree. In the world of today, there are still many branches of the Islamic faith, but the two major ones are the Sunnis and Shias.

Terrorism and Islam

A great deal of the current re-surfacing and strengthening of the negative stereotyping of Islam in the West has to do with perceived links between the religion, terrorism, radicalism and jihad. Terrorism and Islam became strongly linked as a result of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks in the USA. All terrorists were Muslims and their act of terrorism was presented as a religious act. Terrorism however was not invented by the terrorists of September 11, 2001.

Already in 1577 the "Spanish Fury," a time of unusual cruelty and horror toward innocents in Antwerp, was qualified as an act of terrorism. Through the centuries, there are many more

¹ Body of Muslim scholars (Mullahs) trained in Islam and Islamic law

examples of these kinds of acts. Many of the terrorists then were associated with a state. Edmund Burke first used the word ‘terrorist’ during the French revolution in 1795 in his description of the new French government. In 1866, the word ‘terrorist’ was for the first time used in the context of “anti-government” fighter. In those times, terror had a purpose: overthrowing governments or regimes. With the ending of the ideological wars in contemporary history, the sponsorship of national liberation terrorism also ended (Bobbitt, 2008).

We are now confronted by a new form of terrorism, unusually cruel and based solely on distorted values. The most peace-threatening example of all is Al Qaeda. The often (ab)used word ‘jihad’ is used in the West in combination with the word ‘terrorism’ (Ahmed, 2007). Jihad however has many different meanings, varying from a peaceful movement with the goal of improved understanding to ‘striving’ or ‘struggle’, not as in a holy war, but a struggle within oneself. However, some explain jihad as being equal to violence (Ansary, 2009).

Contemporary global jihadism according to Reza Aslan has more characteristics of a social movement than of a religious one. Jihadism originated from Arab anti-colonialists. The doctrine originated in the 13th century from the legal scholar Achmad Ibn Taymiyah, and has more in common with the French revolution and the Russian Bolsheviks than with Muslim nationalistic groups. The use of the word ‘jihad’ for describing acts of violence is often experienced as an insult by Muslims and proves once again the lack of understanding of Islam in the non-Muslim world (Aslan, 2009).

The earliest history of suicide terrorism dates back to the ancient Jewish zealots who used it to liberate Judea from Roman occupation. In the 11th and 12th century, there were the Ismaili assassins. In most recent history, there were the Japanese Kamikazes. Suicide bombing was first introduced in 1981, when it was used by an Islamic Shia group in the attack on the Embassy of Iraq in Beirut. According to Robert Pape suicide terrorism was popularized by the Tamil Tigers. Pape his study shows that there is little or no relation between suicide terrorism and any of the major world religions (Bobbitt, 2008). The Holy Qur’an disapproves of suicide (Ahmed, 2007). Thus, suicide bombing clearly has no religious base, but is only driven by strategic objectives (Pape, 2005).

Islamic society and Terrorism

Being of the Islamic faith is in many places in the world seen as a prerequisite for being a terrorist (Aslan, 2006). People with Islamic sounding names are oftentimes required or

advised to use a different (more western) name when working and living in western communities (Ansary, 2009). Recent suicide (bombings) attacks in Mumbai and Jakarta, a suicide attempt on one of the princes of Saudi Arabia, the foiled terrorist attack in the USA in late September 2009 are the latest examples of people from the Islamic faith claiming to execute these acts of terrorism in the name of Islam. According to the World Gallup poll in 2007 around 7% of Muslims hold extremist views (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007). However, according to opinion polls from 2006/07, a 70% of Muslims worldwide believe that non-Muslim forces are trying to destroy Islam.

The current war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the so-called war on terror, is described by some as a religious war against Islam. Plenty reasons for perceiving it as a religious war can be found. Some of the most cited are the expression by then USA President George Bush that this war on terrorism was a “crusade.” The word “crusade” is interpreted in Arabic as meaning a war of the cross. The war on Islam is not interpreted as only a war fought through military means, but also involving economic, social and cultural strategies. There are Muslims who believe that there is scriptural evidence for this war to be found in the Hadith dealing with the Tradition of the Thawban (Cook, 2005). Ayatollah Khomeini, Sayyid Qutb, Osama Bin Laden and prominent Salafi scholars² are known to (have) use(d) this as a reason to rally against all that represents the non-Muslim world and use it to unite globalist radical Muslims.

Nowadays reasons can be found in the handling of the West of the Israel-Palestine conflict, elections in Palestine, and the media portrayal of Islam. The latter’s strongest examples are the Danish cartoon controversy and the film *Fitna*, an anti-Islam movie by the Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders.

The reactions of the Islamic community to terrorism can be seen in the immediate condemning of the acts of terrorism in September 2001 by major Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Indonesia and many others. Saudi Arabia has a very strong anti-terrorism policy and Indonesia gives terrorists the death penalty. Muslims are becoming more and more very disapproving of terrorists. Recent proof of this is the refusal of Indonesian villagers to have the bodies of the terrorists, killed in October 2009, buried in their village cemeteries. They do not want to be associated with terrorism in any way.

² Those studying and adhering to a school of Islam originating from the teachings from the first three generations of Muslims. Salafism is often interchanged with Wahhabism.

Public Diplomacy

The words “public diplomacy” were first introduced by Edmund Guilker, a career diplomat, in 1965. Long before that time, PD was already practiced during WWI by the USA. However, examples can be found in history that prove that even long before then, during the Middle Ages, use was made of strategies and methods that fit within PD to influence the public. It is said that the most successful PD is born out of necessity, such as declining foreign positive perceptions or the need to improve the image to fit a certain group or out of economic motives or to combat the image of terrorism. Since 09/11, PD has once again become of importance. Because of the improved technologies, mass media and current world political realities the use of PD has to be adjusted in order to meet its goals.

The new PD differs from the old in that nowadays PD is not only an instrument used by states but also by non-state actors and supranational and sub national players. The new PD is a two-way street. Important to remember is also that PD is non-uniform. However, the effectiveness and success of PD is highly dependent on the culture of the user and the receiver, but even more important is that it builds on trust and credibility and works best with long-term goals. When PD is aiming to bridge different cultures the objectives should be modest (Melissen, 2007). This kind of PD is a very slow and complicated process, if not done properly it cause even deeper misunderstandings. It is important to note that PD is not the solution to the problem but can be a very effective and important tool in bringing more clarity and better understanding.

Image

Many are familiar with the terms ‘brand’ and ‘image’ and the fact that there is a relationship between the two. Branding, started with the business sector, its goal was to compete for investments and advance the business. Later, country branding had to provide countries with a powerful tool to attract investments, tourists and advance the country. However, what is important to realize is that branding a country will not instantly lead to a reputable national reputation. You cannot build a reputation. You cannot construct an image. Actually, any image is constructed in the minds of the receiver, uncontrolled by the sender of the message. The audience brands products, countries, or religions.

When it comes to a religion, in this case Islam, it has been branded already by the non-Muslim world. The image is negative. A change cannot come about by just painting a different and improved image with words. Changing an image is a long and complicated process. Crucial aspects in any campaign are:

1. A clear understanding of the image in the world and in-depth understanding of how and what effects this image
2. Long-term planning and
3. An unambiguous message (Ayodele, 2009; Anholt, 2005; Anholt, no date)

Public Diplomacy and its possibilities

Muslim countries are nowadays undertaking PD initiatives on a world stage, whether by themselves or in groupings, such as the OIC practicing Islamic diplomacy. This is characterized by two simultaneous acts: Joint Islamic Action and International Cooperation (Altwajiri, 2009). Any decisions or proposals by the OIC are a product of Islamic diplomacy. Some of their recent diplomatic efforts have a lot to do with the improved understanding of Islam by the non-Muslim world.

During the eighth session of the OIC minister's of Information meeting in Rabat in January 2009, it was decided to improve the media strategy to provide the global community a complete picture of Islam (BI-ME staff, 2009). Most of their diplomatic efforts before were more oriented towards their own regions, but nowadays more and more understand the need to address the world. Examples of this can be found in the special conferences organized by Muslim organizations to discuss ways to deal with the negative image of Islam. One of the first took place in 2001, organized by the Arab League in Cairo and dealing with the "image" issue. Over 70 Islamic experts agreed on the importance of a positive image of Islam in the West and a unified interpretation of Islam (Gauch, 2001).

In addition, recent discussions in the United Nations regarding the guarantees for respect of religion, especially Islam, are an example of joint efforts of the Muslim countries to turn the tide. Muslim nations often also use diplomacy as a group to address the image of Islam. OIC Secretary General, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, expressed OIC's view on the need for promoting the true image at several occasions such as during the Astana Conference in 2008. At that same conference he once again expressed the strong condemnation by the OIC of terrorism (Sarkar, 2008).

The OIC has a Ten-Year Programme of Action dedicated to improving the image of Islam. During a recent meeting of the Joint OIC-Arab League Committee plans were created for media campaigns aiming at the positive portrayal of Islam (OIC, 2009). Pakistan's foreign minister, Sha Mamood Qureshi, recently addressed the importance and significance of

portraying a positive image of Islam. At an international conference at the International Islamic University in Islamabad he declared that the portrayal of the true image of Islam was essential for battling extremism (Pakistan Press International, 2009).

Improving the image of Islam however is not only important for Muslims, it is important for all. This message was very strong in the speech by President Obama in Cairo in 2009. The importance for the West to understand the proper meaning of Islam was central to the speech President Barack Obama held in Cairo. In his speech called “A New Beginning,” the president referred to several passages of the Holy Qur’an to prove that Islam is a religion of peace. He called on Muslims and non-Muslims to engage in open discussions with one another. He pointed out that this was crucial for world peace (Obama, 2009a; Rauf, 2009; Obama, 2009b). Another western leader who has argued for a better understanding of Islam and the importance of Islam in dealing with radicalism is the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Mr. Blair has on several occasions called on Muslims and non-Muslims to understand and promote the proper interpretation of Islam for the sake of peace and eradicating extremism. Mr. Blair argues that ‘hard’ power and ‘soft’ power are necessary to do this (Gledhill, 2009).

The actions suggested by world leaders could all be part of PD. PD offers the possibility of addressing not only governments, but also individual citizens. If done well and effective, it could reach as many global citizens as possible and assist in changing the negative image of Islam currently ingrained in many of their minds. That is why PD offers the Muslim countries an opportunity to increase understanding by the non-Muslim world, improving their image and gaining respect for their countries and Islam as a religion.

The PD strategy to follow could differ per country, depending on the specific issues in that country as well as the tools available. Whatever the strategy, it should be structural and not incidental, it should be effective in reaching the non-Muslim world, and the message should be adjusted to the culture for which it is intended. The strategy should not be one of defense or reaction to accusations but one of explanation and re-introducing a world community and its religion to the non-Muslim world of the 21st century. The choice of the messenger should take into account credibility and image of the medium itself. Al Jazeera is viewed in the West as a partisan media; the mass media used will have to be effective with the target group in the West and will have to be part of the strategy in order for it to reach as broad a public as possible.

However, the structure will have to be modest and long-term, as all PD efforts intended to bridge cultural differences have to be. Too aggressive PD could result in even more damage to the current image and confirm the stereotype that Islam is an aggressive religion (Aslan, 2006).

Reasons for this research

Many associate Islam with terrorism and radicalism on the one hand while on the other hand Muslims feel as if the world is waging war on Islam and completely misunderstands Islam. Muslims living in the Western World suffer from this stigmatizing and the Muslim countries have to deal with a negative and severely tarnished image. This stereotyping has climaxed especially since the attacks of September 11, 2001 in the USA and the resulting ‘war on terror’ led by the USA.

From different surveys, such as conducted by the Gallup Poll and Pew Research Center, over the years, it has become clear that Muslims would like this negative image to be rectified and it is quite clear that improved understanding of and respect for the cultural differences would certainly benefit efforts for peace on a global, regional, and local scale.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether Islamic countries, which are obviously targets of other countries’ PD messages, use public diplomacy to counteract the negative stereotyping and image. Moreover, if they are using it is it structured and is it effective? If they are not, what could be the reasons? I hope that the conclusions of the research will provide us more insights on how the Muslim communities are dealing with the negative image in the rest of the world and what to expect for the future.

Chapter 2

Case Studies

Introduction

In this chapter a profile will be created of the four countries of this case study. This will be the basis for further analysis of their PD related to the image of Islam. Two of the countries are Arab-, one is African- and one is Asian-Islamic. The first is The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, perceived as a modern Islamic country, characterized by historical close ties with the West. However, recent polls show that even in Jordan there are strong anti-western sentiments. Second is Malaysia, known as a strong non-Arab Muslim country. Promoting moderate Islam has been part of their diplomacy. However, recent events may question the tolerant and moderate image. Third is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a country known for its huge oil reserves and close ties with the West, but also for a very strict form of Islam called Wahhabism. Many of the terrorists of 9/11 were Saudis as is Osama bin Laden. Fourth is Senegal, an African Muslim country, known as one of the few democracies in the region and for great tolerance towards differences in religion.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

General introduction

Jordan or Al-Mamlaka al-Urduniya al-Hashimiyah is ruled by King Abdullah II with Prime Minister Nader Dahabi. Jordan is bordered by Israel and the Dead Sea(west), Syria (north), Iraq (east), Saudi Arabia (south). The population of around six million has as official language Arabic and the second language is English. Of this population 98% is Arabic (a substantial portion is of Palestine descent) and the remaining 2% is divided between Armenians and Christians. The literacy rate is 90%.

Jordan has a very old history starting with the Assyrians. By the year 636 they were overrun by Islamic conquerors and islamized. Jordan gained its independence in 1932 and always has to balance its course between Israeli and US interests and Arab Nationalism.

Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with a representative government. Since 1991 political parties are allowed. In the 2007 parliamentary elections a majority of the 110 seats were won by pro-government and independent candidates. Mobile phones are used by approximately 75% of the population. There are 31 radio and 22 television stations, 10-15% of the population are regular internet users.

Foreign Policy and Vision

Jordan's diplomacy fits many of the criteria for small state diplomacy as listed by Alan Henrikson (2008). Jordan's geographical location, the composition of its population and its history require complicated choices. The MFA of Jordan describes its diplomacy as having "visionary quality" (Henrickson, 2008). The "Hashemite Vision" aims for "openmindedness and awareness of constraints" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no date).

Their diplomatic capabilities are necessities to mediate and manage hostile situations. Jordan has a central role in the region in commerce, they coordinate the G11, lower- and middle-income countries group dealing with the challenges of those that do no longer fit the category of lower income countries, an initiative of King Abdullah II (G11, 2007). Jordan actively campaigns for solving of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It has a long-standing role in regional water issues, peace efforts and religious challenges.

King Hussein was the first to propose the 'two state solution', when recognizing Israel. The 'Arab Peace Initiative' has the support of Jordan. King Hussein was very active in the UN in the drafting of resolution 242 and 338. Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel on October 26, 1994 and kept on advocating for peace. In later years King Abdullah was very instrumental in constructing the 'Roadmap for Peace'. Jordan participates in other peace negotiations involving Israel. Jordan's relationship with the West and its wish to be viewed as a true Arab Muslim kingdom often results in a schizophrenic attitude. Jordan has always been one of the strongest pro-western states (Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe, 2003).

Jordan's diplomacy has an institutional base, but the authority is mainly in the Royal Palace. It is supported by a network of diplomatic and international institutions worldwide, which is organized in the International Forum on Diplomatic Training (IFDT). The Jordan Institute of Diplomacy (JID), established in 1994, its most important role is to improve and further

increase Jordan's communication on a global level, thereby providing new possibilities for information exchange (Anon., 2008). PD is part of the responsibilities of this institute.

Jordan is very much aware that conventional diplomacy alone will not satisfy its needs for security and peace. To reach the hearts and minds of the people, its diplomacy includes many PD activities. Dealing with its limited water resources fits in this category. The Kingdom is making strong efforts in promoting the old city of Petra to become one of the new "Wonders of the World," including the preservation of all that is left of its old water systems (Henrikson, 2008). The good relations with Israel are also important in avoiding a water shortage for Jordan. Jordan was in 1980 the only Arab country to support the World Conservation Strategy (WCS).

Jordan views PD as a strong tool in achieving peace, regionally and globally. This vision in relation to the image of Islam was clearly expressed by King Abdullah II at the Second World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies in June 2006. He acknowledged the need and importance of informed, educated societies in the Middle East and worldwide. Most crucial he noted, was the rectifying of the image of the Muslim and Arab world. In his vision, this is a responsibility of all educated and influential people (Anon., 2006).

An important aspect of Jordan's diplomacy is the belief that Islam is a peaceful, just and tolerant religion. It strongly condemns terrorism and extremism. Already in 1996 the late King Hussein hosted the "Summit of the Peacemakers" to combat terrorism through international cooperation. September 11, 2001 made these efforts a priority and in 2004 Jordan proclaimed the *Amman Message*. This initiative of King Abdullah II is an agreement between Muslim representatives of prestigious institutes. It provides Muslims with a guideline on true Islam and the agreed interpretation of important Islamic concepts. The Amman Message is regarded by Jordanians as one of their most significant diplomatic efforts and the perfect tool to deal with the misconceptions about Islam.

The message aims to clarify to Muslim and non-Muslim, Jordan's vision about Islam's nature. It carries strong religious authority and presents a unanimous image of Islam. The message is still acquiring recognition. Eighty-four countries, including non-Muslim ones, have endorsed the message, including the Arab League of Nations and the OIC.

The Amman message has its own official website. It was published with a foreword by King Abdullah II, in which he emphasizes the importance and great meaning of the message. He describes it as "a unanimous agreement by all Muslims everywhere..."(Abdullah II bin Al-

Hussein, 2006). He defines it as one that could assist in creating a more peaceful world. The major part of his speech addresses the Muslim community.

In the Amman message the opening address states “in this declaration we speak frankly to the Islamic nation...”(The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2004). In the final paragraphs, the message aims to convince the world that Islam respects all humanity, is tolerant and forgiving. It carries a strong condemnation of terrorism and extremism as well as of the international “campaign” for negative branding of the religion. It calls upon all Muslims to involve themselves in advocacy and educational activities of the youth. Religious scholars should include this message in their sermons (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2004).

The Amman Message led to the ‘Three Points of the Amman Message’ in 2005. In order to provide more religious leverage to the summary of the ‘Amman Message’ and to deal with the main image problems of Islam, King Abdullah involved 200 senior religious scholars from 50 countries in establishing the “Three Points of the Amman Message’. These three points in essence define a Muslim, an apostate and the right to issue legal rulings. The OIC unanimously adopted ‘The Three Points’ in December 2005. The Amman Message has its own plan of action.

It involves the signing of treaties; legislation; strategies for further circulation; incorporation into formal educational systems worldwide and ingraining the religious scholars. The Amman Message website allows visitors, to endorse it through an automatic pop-up window. According to the explanation provided, this endorsement allows everyone to contribute towards world peace.

Member countries of the OIC have endorsed this message as have many African countries. Citizens of the USA and Europe, most of whom are Muslim or member of a Muslim organization, have endorsed the message. The message did a great service in providing a feeling of Muslim unity; as discussed during a conference in Britain in 2005. It was mentioned in the Economist and Newsweek and former Prime Minister Tony Blair mentioned the message during one of his speeches. However, there is no mentioning of it in later years.

As part of Jordans’ PD efforts, Prince Hassan Bin Talal, the uncle of the King hosted the ‘The World Conference of Religions for Peace’. The objective, to use PD in peace building, was suggested by the Prince at the International Forum on Diplomatic Training. He reiterated the importance of creating bridges of understanding through educational programs, exchange, and cooperation (Anon., 2002).

King Abdullah reaches out to politicians and diplomats of other countries as in the speech in March 2007 for the American Congress, where he promoted a common vision through the exchange of ideas (Abdullah II, 2007). The aim was promoting peace in the Middle East through the 'Arab Peace Initiative' (The Royal Hashemite Court, 2007). Another occasion was his address to the European Parliament in December 2007 (Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 2009).

The King also speaks at educational institutions, such as Princeton University (Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Washington D.C., no date). All his presentations project unlimited possibilities for international cooperation (Henrikson, 2008). On his own website, a special section deals with the image of Islam.

There are also examples of Queen Rania her efforts to rectify misconceptions about Muslim women, such as her visit to a High School in Los Angeles (Hall, 2007). She has her own website promoting education and dealing with women's issues. She has created an image for herself that contradicts the stereotypes surrounding Muslim women. She is an Eminent Advocate for the UNICEF and an honorary chairperson for UNGEI as well as a board member of the World Economic Forum.

Other noteworthy initiatives by Jordan include its annual gathering of Nobel Prize laureates at Petra. Jordan participates in youth exchange programs with western countries. Jordan hosted 'The Fourth IOC World Conference on Women and Sport' in March 2008 to highlight the changing roles of women, sending the message that sport could aid in bringing social change.

Jordan's apparent non-confrontational approach is not always appreciated by the Palestinians and conservative Islamists and the public condemnation of terrorism after September 11th, 2001, has not been without consequences. Jordan also provided assylum to the daughters of Saddam Hussein. The consequences were terrorist attacks on Jordanian targets in 2003 and 2005.

Jordan and Islam

In Jordan, according to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, 63% of the population see themselves first as Muslims and then as Jordanians. However, Jordanians believe that Islam does not play a major role in the politics of the country. They do not believe in an increased extremism threat, if Islam would have a stronger role in their political life. Most in Jordan believe that extremism can be defined as the use of violence "to rid the country of non-

Muslim influences”(Pew Global Attitudes Project, no date). In Jordan many associate Islamic extremism with the forced adhering to strict Sharia laws.

Jordanians believe that extremism could result in less freedom and a divided country as well as a deteriorating economic development; 38% of the Jordanians see as the major causes for extremism, U.S. policies and influence in the Muslim world. They believe that Islam should be of more importance in global politics. They do believe that Islam is seriously threatened, but this fear has shown a decrease over the past years. However, their justification for terrorist attacks has increased especially when Americans and their allies are targeted (Pew Global Attitudes Project, no date). The invasion of Iraq and the Israeli-Palestine conflict are the reasons why Jordanians approve of terrorist attacks on western objects.

Jordan is no stranger to manifestations of Islamic activism. Earlier the Muslim Brotherhood were strong allies of the King, but because of the moderate politics and diplomacy by the government they are no longer supportive and growing more radical. Especially the signing of the peace treaty with Israel led to a rift, since the Muslim Brotherhood does not recognize this treaty. Another challenge for Jordan is that intellectual Salafism is centred there and has led to Jihadi sentiments and armed groups. The Amman message was part of dealing with this, teaching a more tolerant vision of Islam.

Jordan's image in the West

Jordanians share in the stereotyping of Muslims and Arabs. After 9/11 the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims as “Bombers, Belly dancers and Billionaires, the Three B’s,”(Qumsiyeh, 2006; Qumsiyeh, no date), only increased and is even more now in the role of them being terrorists. Muslim women seem to be the biggest victims of stereotyping, always portrayed as backward and oppressed.

Despite the stereotypes, Jordans contemporary image does have a more positive standing globally because of the activities of the Kingdom. Contemporary challenges for the Jordanian image are the so-called ‘honor killings’. Eventhough Jordan has at times been viewed in a negative perspective, it is generally portrayed as a nation through which peace brokering is possible.

Jordan's view on the West

Jordanians are unhappy with the current image of Islam. Many accuse the West of using double standards when it comes to the Muslim world. In line with the obligation of all Muslims to correct faulty understandings of Islam's principles, King Abdullah, as a

descendant of Aal Al Bayt (the family of the Prophet), has been one of the most outspoken voices in the Islamic world in this regard.

Image to be portrayed to the West

Jordan has made serious efforts to address attacks on Islam by promoting true understanding of the faith. These efforts are inspired by the religious and historical legacy of the Hashemite monarchy. The late King Hussein persisted to reform the image and support the unity of the world's Muslims. His son, determined to fight against Muslim marginalization and isolation globally, continued this effort. Through the Amman Message, the image that Jordan wished to portray of Islam is one that accepts different faiths and peoples (Royal Hashemite Court, 2008).

Tools and Strategies used

Jordan makes use of mass media and social media, such as websites. Tourism, including arts and culture, is actively promoted worldwide through media campaigns. Global recognition is sought for the historical value of many of its sites.

PD includes religious efforts as the Amman message and peace initiatives; education, exchange programs and other forms of cooperation. In addition, economic forums and all kinds of other gatherings are hosted by Jordan.

The PD efforts of Jordan are effective since it is viewed by the West as a country that is engaged with the West, sharing its concerns. From the above it can be ascertained that all PD initiatives are led by the Royal family. There are no indications of independent initiatives by non-Royals. Another characteristic of the Jordanian PD is that it shows clearly that Jordan wants to be a frontrunner in the Muslim world and especially the Middle East.

Jordan is aware of the issues that influence the image of Islam abroad and develops strategies to deal with these. They make use of western media and have a woman in the lead. They use modern media technology to connect with the general public in the West. Lacking is however, a structured communication with their population and between their people and the rest of the world. Their initiatives lack a good, effective and long-term media strategy.

The Amman Message is mostly directed to the Muslim world. Even though there is a plan of action, there is no real follow-up resulting in a change in the image of Islam. This is crucial, since follow-up is important for successful PD. The Amman message did result in a network of religious scholars, but there is no indication that there was a trickledown effect to the community. The message did reach the West as it was mentioned by western leaders and at

some western Universities that offer Islamic studies. But it had no real impact on the general image of Islam in the West.

The organization of international events guarantees international media coverage and Jordan seems somewhat experienced in the use of international media. Jordan's PD involves advocacy, exchange programs, culture, and tourism. Listening, however, is in a limited way, since limits on freedom of expression hamper open discussions. Lacking is also networking and community building. The biggest challenge remains the dissonance between the domestic reality and the desired image of Islam.

Malaysia

General Introduction

Malaysia is a country that pursues both modernity and its Islamic image, sometimes in an aggressive manner. It is a country where ethnic and religious groups exist under different rules and legislation, Muslim and non-Muslim, Malay and non-Malay. The minorities, all non-Muslims, are treated in many cases as second-class citizens. For the past years, they have been struggling to keep common law and the secular constitution intact. Malaysia is not so much a pluralistic nation as it is a country with two parallel societies. The current population is 27,730,000 of which 59 % are the Bumiputera or "sons of the soil", while 32% is Chinese and 9% is Indian (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2008). 'Malay' is constitutionally defined by article 160(2) as "a person who professed the Muslim religion, habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay customs." (Swee-Hock Saw and Kesavapany, 2006).

Malaysia defines itself as a Muslim country, and the majority of the population (60.4%) practices Islam. Buddhism, Christianity and Hinduism are other important religions. Even though the constitution states religious freedom for all, other religions feel increasingly threatened.

Malaysia's strategic location, between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, has resulted in a history of foreign influences. Up to the 13th century it was a prominent center for trade and commerce. In the beginning several sultanates were established by different, mostly Hindu empires, which later became Muslim (Tourism Department Malaysia, no date). Malaysia as a united country came into existence in 1963 (International Press, no date).

Malaysia is a Federal Constitutional Elective Monarchy with a Parliamentary Democracy. Head of State is the Yang di Pertuan Agong, hereditary ruler chosen in rotations from among five sultans. His wide array of authorities and responsibilities stem from the Constitution. Head of Government is the Prime Minister (Malaysian government, no date). The official language of the country is Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Melayu.

Malaysia derives its income mainly from manufacturing. The tourism industry is increasingly contributing to its income (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2008). Malaysia runs an aggressive tourism campaign with the slogan: “Malaysia, Truly Asia”. Many tourists see it as an attractive destination (Phan, no date). The latest statistics indicate that Malaysia received 22.0 million tourists in 2008. The number has steadily increased since the year 2000 (Mohammed B., 2005).

Foreign Policy and Vision

Malaysia's MFA, better known as Wisma Putra has, over time, increased its role in global diplomacy, in international organizations and in its efforts towards improving the position of the so-called ‘third world’. The Ministry began as the Ministry of External Affairs, Federation of Malaya. Its primary goals are the promotion and defense of Malaysia's interest, bilaterally, regionally and internationally, including promoting trade and investment as well as projecting the country's image. The aim is to reach the status of a developed nation by 2020. Nowadays Malaysia has 105 diplomatic missions across the world.

Malaysia aims to project itself as a prominent example of a tolerant and progressive Islamic country. The aspirations are to play a leading role in the OIC and the ASEAN. Malaysia is a founding member of both organizations and up until now, ASEAN is the cornerstone of their foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, 2008a). Recently Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib noted at the 40th anniversary of the OIC that this organization has the position to provide a defense against extremism and Islamophobia on a global scale (Anon., 2009).

That Malaysia deems the image of Islam important for their foreign policy is reflected in the fact that the Department of Multilateral Affairs has an Islamic Affairs Division. The Department of Information and Public Diplomacy has as its overall task to create an improved understanding of Malaysia. The division of PD is expected to have good relations and improve communications with all relevant institutions with the purpose of improving the image of Malaysia and to depict an accurate picture of the country and its culture and policies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, 2009)(Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, 2008a).

In the perception of the Malaysian government, PD is a two way street, providing information to the international community as well as to the Malaysian citizens. It wants to be an active participant in promoting the dialogue between Islam and the West. As explained on the site of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) a pre-condition for world peace is an ongoing exchange between cultures and civilizations (IDFR, 2008). The department maintains a website for the ministry, prepares publications, and is involved in research and documentation. Key policy factors include a “ Friends of Malaysia” program as well as Information and PD.

Malaysia participates actively in ASEAN, plays a role in promoting cooperation between the countries of the Group of 15 and the Developing 8. Globally, Malaysia plays a role of interest in many organisations. Malaysia participates actively in the Commonwealth, it has been a member since 1957 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, 2008b).

Public Diplomacy and Islam

The department for Communication and Public Diplomacy has the ultimate goal of improving Malaysia’s image. Malaysia has identified as its soft power its cuisine and is providing incentives to those who open Malaysian restaurants around the world. The idea is that the multicultural image of Malaysia can best be portrayed through its cuisine which represents all the different communities in Malaysia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, no date). Special attention is given to the Middle East peace process for which Malaysia hosted a special meeting resulting in the adoption of the ‘Declaration on Palestine’ in April 2004.

Malaysia supports and organizes intercultural and interfaith dialogues. In June 2007, it hosted the “Third International Conference on the Muslim World and the West: Bridging the Gap”, which was covered by the press and attended by high-level government officials. It was a follow-up of the conference organized in 2006: ‘Who speaks for Islam? Who speaks for the West?’ The conference had more than 500 participants. The Foreign Minister of Malaysia emphasized that the purpose of the dialogue was to develop greater understanding between the Muslim world and the West. On a domestic level, there are many interfaith groups active in Malaysia. They have several purposes: consultative, promoting interreligious harmony and understanding and social activities at grassroots level. The purpose of these groups is to keep the secular constitution alive.

The philosophy of Islam Hadhari, introduced by Dato’ Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the former prime minister, forms an important part of the PD campaign. This is a form of

civilizational Islam. Malaysia requested a leading role in the OIC in September 2008 in combating Islamophobia as part of its PD actions (Bernama, 2008).

Malaysia's view of the West

According to W. Duiker and J. Spielvogel(2007, p. 866), due to increased globalization western culture is causing fears and rejection by especially the more fundamentalist Islamists, who see western culture as mostly pornographic as well as promoting drugs and alcohol abuse. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad's speech, then Malaysian Prime Minister, at the OIC summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2003 was widely criticized by the West. They felt that he was promoting hate crimes and terrorism and targeting especially Jews (BBC News, 2003). Dr. Mahathir was a strong advocate for the so-called 'Asian values', which had to explain that western values (especially democracy) are not applicable in Asia (Inoguchi and Newman, 1997). However, in the general life of Malaysia and even in their education systems there is still some western influence (Lee, 2000, pp. 315-329).

Malaysian image in the West

Malaysia is seen as one of the few democratic Islamic states; however, freedom of citizens is restricted in several ways; citizen rights are not equal but depend on the ethnic group people belong to. Recent incidents exemplify this: a Malaysian Muslim woman sentenced to caning for drinking beer, while non-Muslim women are not punishable for this. Another example was a concert by a western performer which Muslims were not allowed to attend. On the other hand Muslims have more religious freedom than any other group. There have also been anti-zionist expressions by leaders of government and some of the justice system had 'hudud' laws incorporated. These laws are part of Sharia and are fixed punishment for crimes that are described as 'claims of God'.

Image to be portrayed to the West

Malaysia wants to be viewed as the example of the successful modern Islamic state. It wants to be seen as the model multiracial nation and the prime example of a developing country. However, there are important gaps between the desired image and reality. The recent religious conflicts show an religiously intolerant country and the recently expressed views by Dr. Mahathir as were the events of 09/11 staged, give an impression of a nation in denial of reality.

Islam Hadhari

The word 'Hadhari' has its origin in the Arabic word "Hadhara" which implies progressiveness and development. This concept has been recurring since the 1970's. Mahathir

coined 'Islam Hadhari' in February 1991, when he presented his well-known 'The Way Forward' speech. In this speech, he called for drastic adjustments culturally and religiously. The vision presented by Mahathir, had a more nationalistic character, and intended to use modernity to protect and defend Islam. 'Islam Hadhari' successfully re-emerged during the elections of 2004. It promotes the rule of law, social order and their enforcement.

Even though there are many reasons why 'Islam Hadhari' appeals to the majority of the Malaysian population, the reasons that are of interest to this discussion are: It allows for development in line with modern lifestyles, it provides guidance for the Malay business people in the age of globalization. And, the events of September 11, 2001 allowed for an important role for 'Islam Hadhari' in positioning Malaysia globally as a model Muslim society. Some Middle Eastern countries have shown interest in this philosophy (Chong Terence, 2006). It has been promoted at institutions abroad and was accepted and recognized during the third Special Summit of the OIC in December 2005 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia, 2009). As part of the inward promotion strategy, an Islamic theme park was opened in Malaysia.

Tools and Strategies used

The MFA has an up-to-date website. Malaysia promotes Islam Hadhari, a good philosophy to associate with the image of Malaysia in the West. In its presentation, Malaysian PD made use of the media, however in a limited manner. It was mentioned in newspapers, mainly Asian. Some books and studies mention 'Islam Hadhari'. ASEAN also recognized the philosophy.

The multicultural character of Malaysia has some challenges. Culture and ethnicity have always been of importance in politics and an example of this is the Barisan Nasional (a political coalition). There has always been a Malay dominance and for the past years, there has been an increased influence of Islam.

Malaysia participates in exchange programs and other types of cooperation. Tourism, as earlier mentioned, is a very strong tool in the campaign for presenting Malaysia to the world. Last year Malaysia embarked on the promotion of religious tourism. The purpose is to teach foreigners, non-Muslims, about Islam by allowing them to visit Muslim sites. In 2009 Melaka and Penang were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List based on the theme of religious harmony (Citrinot, 2010). Of course with recent incidents it has become obvious that this harmony is questionable. Another issue is the implementation of Sharia law whereby

punishments are handed down that are similar to those in the Middle Ages, such as caning. These images contradict an image of modernity.

It appears that Malaysia is not addressing all the influences that shape the image of Islam in a western mind. Maybe due to the Asian values. However, the Asian values oppose the most sacred Western values of democracy. It will be very challenging to present a for the West positive image on Islam in Malaysia based on Asian values. Apparently Malaysia is trying to mask the reality behind an aggressive tourism campaign. A difference with Jordan however, is that the Malaysian royalty is not as involved as the Jordanian. A weakness is that there are no Malaysian women involved in any PD campaign.

Malaysia's PD is hampered by the domestic reality that is not in line with the image portrayed. It is more difficult now to control the information flow in- and out of the country, even with the limitations on freedom of speech. Advocacy is done in a moderate manner at the international bodies they are member of and at the conferences they host. They do make some effort through the interfaith dialogues. However, it should be noted that the media interest is not as high as it should be.

The Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

General introduction

The Kingdom portrays itself and is viewed by many Muslims as the Custodian of Islam's Holy Sites. The population of Saudi Arabia is 27 – 28 million (CIA, no date), of which 93.4% are Muslim (79% Sunni and 13.4% Shi'a), the remaining 6.6% is divided between Christians (4% of which 98% are expatriates), Hindus (0.7%) , Buddhists (0.5%) and others (1.4%) (Persecution.org, 2009).

The Arabian peninsula's history started over 5000 years ago. Saudi Arabia has been a well-known trade center for most of that time. The Islamic religion was born on this peninsula and the two most important places for Muslims, Mekka and Medina, are both in the Peninsula.

The Kingdom is the result of many conquests and re-conquests starting in 1744, when the first Saudi State was established. The Kingdom as we know it today was established in 1932 as a result of the unification of all the regions under The House of Saud.

King Saud's initiative for an international Islamic Conference led to the establishment of the Muslim World League. They had an important role in the establishment of the OIC as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council. Saudi Kings are active in peace efforts, regionally and

globally. Specific mention needs to be made in this regard of the 'Arab Peace Initiative' for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and efforts to resolve the civil war in Lebanon. Saudi Arabia also had an important role during the Iraq-Kuwait conflict. The country is known for providing (emergency) humanitarian assistance to several countries. Saudi Arabia's economy is petroleum-based (Bureau of Eastern Affairs, 2009).

The current King places great emphasis on international diplomacy and seeks a leadership role for Saudi Arabia in the defense of issues regarding Arabs and Islam and in the strive for world peace. 'The Arab Peace Initiative', was adopted by the League of Arab States in 2002 and formally re-introduced in 2007. The proposal includes a full normalization of the relationship between the Arab world and Israel. At the same time, it requires the reinstatement of the boundaries from before the war of 1967 and the creation of a Palestinian state. The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, recently referred to this initiative as a basis for peace in the Middle East and President Obama stated that he plans to make it part of the Middle East Peace policy.

In the Islamic world Saudi Arabia has a central role. The Kingdom is ruled based on Islamic laws, which form the basic legislative branch. It is a monarchy and the King is the highest authority, he is Head of State as well as Head of Government. According to the Basic Law of 1992, Saudi Arabia is a monarchy ruled by the male descendants of King Abd Al Aziz Al Saud. The Holy Qur'an is the constitution and government is based on Sharia law. The Council of Ministers is appointed by the King and is responsible to him. Criminal laws are mostly a product of the conservative Sunni Islam also known as Wahhabism.

Religious courts with judges appointed by the King, are in charge of handing out justice. Rulings in the Saudi courts are part of its image problem in the West. People in Saudi Arabia are afraid to come in contact with their justice system. The accusations and cases at different Human Rights institutes speak for themselves. There is a lack of human rights and women rights especially, no religious rights and torture is very common. Sharia is enforced by the religious police or Mutaween.

One of the important decision making institutions is the Shoura council or Al-Shoura. The Council provides validation to the decisions made by the government. Political parties or unions are not allowed under Saudi law. In 2005 Saudi Arabia held municipal elections. In every municipal, half of the members are elected and the other half are appointed. The idea is

that through the Municipal the people have an opportunity to participate in decisionmaking (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Saudi Arabia, 2006; Carnegie Endowment, 2009).

Foreign Policy and Vision

The foreign policy is in line with Sharia and values sovereignty and non-interference. It aims for international peace and justice, recognizing self-determination and self-defense. The government condemns international terrorism and it is stated that Islam does not support terrorism. According to the website of the MFA, Saudi Arabia adheres to international law. Arab and Islamic issues have to be defended globally by all legal means (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, no date).

Islam is a strong determining factor in foreign policy priorities in Saudi Arabia. The King is the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques and the Kingdom influences the world Muslim community. Aside from this, the Kingdom is home to the Headquarters of the OIC as well as to the Muslim World League. Saudi Arabia is a founding member of the United Nations. The Kingdom strongly defends Arab and Islamic issues on the global stage, especially through the OIC and the Arab League (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2005).

The main goals in the Islamic foreign policy are to achieve solidarity, encourage economic cooperation between Islamic countries, protect Islam against attacks, and confront new challenges. At the same time, the protection and rights from Muslims worldwide are also considered. An important facet in all of the Islamic foreign policy is the projection of the true image of Islam and Sharia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2005).

The first entity for handling foreign affairs was established in 1926 by King Faisal. Nowadays it has a very broad network of missions across the globe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, no date).

The Saudi foreign policy can be described in different circles of international involvement.

- *The Gulf circle* is the most important one of all, due to shared economic and political systems as well as a shared history. The six Gulf States established the Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf (GCC) in 1981.
- The second circle is the *Arab Circle*, focussed on the recognition of Joint Arab Action.

- *The Islamic circle* is the third circle. The Kingdom is always striving for Islamic solidarity and for this reason they have been involved in the establishment of the Muslim World League in 1962 as well as the OIC in 1969. The headquarters of both organisations are in Saudi Arabia.
- *The International circle* is accomplished through the establishment of international relations and participating in international organisations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, no date).

The Arab region is no stranger to the use of public relations and communication in general. Saudi Arabia started making use of public relations in the late 1930's when the oil exploration began. As the Kingdom developed into a modern state the Saudi government presented itself more frequent to the outside world using all available communication tools. This did not go without challenges, since every tool and method used, has to be in line with Islam as practiced in Saudi Arabia. Over the years the responsibility for public relations, which was first more tied to the business community, has become a task of the government. Research shows that the use of public relations in the ministries is more on an as-needed basis than on a structural basis (Alanazi, 1996).

An important communication tool of Saudi Arabia is the Saudi Press Agency. This agency resorts under the Ministry of Culture and Information and is responsible for spreading official news and information from the Saudi government to the press and mass media. They do that 24 hours a day in three languages [Arabic, English and French] (SAMIRAD, no date). The culture aspect was only recently added to the responsibilities of this ministry. Through the Saudi Arabian Information Center, the ministry provides information to their citizens on culture and history. There are two of these centers overseas, one in London and one in Tunisia.

Considering the size of the Saudi Foreign Service as well as its interest and budget available, it is striking that there are only two information centers worldwide. There could be two explanations for this: either the government is still in the process of preparing to open up more, since culture was only recently added to the responsibilities of the ministry or interacting with the world culturally is not a priority. If this aspect of PD is recognized as important by the Saudi government, it should be expected that there would be a much larger

number of Information Centers around the world, especially in European countries and the USA.

Philanthropy

According to the Saudi Press Agency, the donor policy results from the Muslim responsibility to share the wealth with the less fortunate. Currently Saudi Arabia is the leading donor for humanitarian causes with 0.19% of its GDP. They have been an important ODA donor since the 1970's. In 1999 this was acknowledged by then UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan (SPA, 1999). The provided aid is not limited to Islamic countries. Saudi Arabia has collaborated with the World Bank as well as with the World Food Program (World Food Programme, 2009).

There is also the Saudi Fund for development. King Fahd established many charities and Islamic organizations. According to some, with the purpose of spreading Wahhabi Islam (Gold, 2004). The Saudi leadership has donated on various occasions funds for educational institutions or private persons in need. In a short time (1982-2002), a record number of educational and religious facilities were built in non-Muslim countries. During the 1980's millions were spent on the building of mosques in the United States of America. Several institutions for higher learning such as the Harvard Law School received funds from the Saudi government.

According to some, these kinds of PD activities are no more than Islamic propaganda and limited to Africa, India, Central Asia, and the Far East (Buchan, no date). There are accusations that part of the funds went toward the establishment of madrassas, which were breeding grounds for extremism. However, according to documents from the Saudi government their PD in the form of Saudi Arabian Aid is spread worldwide (SAMIRAD, no date; General Secretariat, 2009).

Globally there is a concern that Saudi Arabia has been funding terrorism and radicalism through education. The Saudi government denies this, saying that it is against their policy. After the September 11, 2001 events, a report was published by the bipartisan National Commission on Terrorist attacks on the United States, which indicated that there was no proof of funding of Al Qaeda by the Saudi government or its high officials.

There were indications that the terrorist organization raised funding in Saudi Arabia through individuals and 'charities', some with significant government connections. Up until now there are no reports indicating the total amount of financial support that would have been donated

by Saudi Arabia to the so-called madrassas. However, it is very difficult to dismiss indications of Saudi involvement, because they keep recurring.

Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue

Saudi Arabia supports interfaith and intercultural dialogues. In July 2008, they participated in a dialogue with Spain. In 2008 Saudi Arabia hosted at the UN a “Peace of Culture” gathering for Muslim and non-Muslim nations. In January 2009, Saudi Islamic and social scholars participated in a gathering with representatives from different faiths to discuss the role faith played in their lives (Muqtedar, 2009).

Saudi Arabian views of the West

Over the years the unfavorable view of the West has increased in Saudi Arabia. This is of concern to Saudis and they would like the relations to improve. Many appreciate certain values of the West such as democracy and freedom of speech. There are concerns about the decrease in morals and rise of ethical corruption. Many feel that Islam is not respected by the West. Saudi women disapprove of the treatment of women in the West and resent the perceived lack of modesty (Gallup Worldpoll, 2006). Some view the West as the instigators of extremist Islam. There are also those that believe that the West is waging a war against Islam. Saudis want Arabs in general and Saudi Arabia especially to have a greater role in world politics

Saudi Arabia’s image in the West

Historically Arabs, have been portrayed in the West as backward and/or aggressive. The typical portrayal of an Saudi is that of a “hooked -nosed robed Arab surrounded by camels and oilwells” as described by Allan Palmer in the “Arab image in newspapers” (1995). This has not changed. Saudi Arabia is the promoter of the Wahhabism branch of the Islamic faith. Recently their educational materials have been criticized for citing hatred against other religions and even other branches of Islam. Saudi Arabia is also suspected of promoting fundamentalism.

The funding of extremism through madrassas in especially Pakistan is a frequently made claim of experts in the field of fundamentalism. This fundamentalism is spreading through out the Islamic world (Frontline, 1995). The suspicions in the West that Saudi Arabia is a sponsor of terrorism have already been discussed earlier in this chapter. Saudi Arabia has an image of disregard for human rights and religiously intolerant. This is confirmed through reports of Human Rights Organisations.

How Saudis want to be viewed by the West

The Saudi foreign policy implies that Saudi Arabia due to its Arab foundations and Muslim heritage, can not always have policies congruent with the rest of the world. Saudis want the West to understand and accept that the dress of women results from the Islamic expectation of modesty. According to the Saudi government the treatment of women is in line with the Holy Qur'an. However, this view is not shared by other Muslims and in the West the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia is perceived as oppressive and lacking in respect. The Saudi government points out that the Islamic faith as practiced by them is progressive towards women; the Holy Qur'an provided women with the right to inheritance and property long before it was a woman's right in the West.

Currently the Saudi government is making efforts to correct the image regarding women's rights (SAMIRAD, no date; SAMIRAD, no date). There is education available to Saudi girls. Recently the first woman was appointed in the cabinet of ministers (AFP, 2010). The King opened in 2009 the first co-ed university. Saudi Arabia wants to be seen as a social and caring society with a religion that deserves respect. They also want to be seen as leaders of Islam and respectable and equal business partners.

Tools and Strategies used

Saudi Arabia uses the internet for spreading information about its society, culture and religion. Many embassies have websites as do many of the ministries. Several newspapers are published in English and some can be accessed online. Television and radio have been utilized in outreach to the Arab and Islamic region more than to the West. When it comes to the use of culture and arts, there are no specific examples, probably due to the restrictions on freedom of expression that Saudi artists face.

The main source and tool used for promotion of the country, is the Council of Saudi Chambers for export promotion and business association. SAMIRAD is one of the main online promotion agents. The site is in English. Saudi Arabia does have educational institutions overseas and is involved in exchange programs with especially the USA. Recently the educational institutes came under scrutiny for suspicion of spreading intolerance amongst religions.

The power of donations and humanitarian aid have a dubious role in the image projection of Saudi Arabia. The biggest challenge for Saudi Arabia is the existing image in the West and the domestic reality as presented in reports of different organisations. There has not been much creativity in interaction with the western public. The hard reality is that an image and

reputation cannot be bought, it has to be earned. It can be observed that only recently Saudi Arabia felt the need to protect the Islamic image through diplomacy.

Recent involvement of the Kingdom in religious dialogue could be interpreted as a realization of this fact. Freedom of expression, according to Human Rights Watch, deteriorated in 2008. Any criticism of government or religion is punished severely. To get rid of the 'religious intolerant' label Saudi Arabia hosted three interfaith summits and called on Muslim clerics to promote tolerance, and the King made some noteworthy visits, such as to the Pope.

A major development was the opening of a co-ed University by the King. The institute was praised by him as a 'beacon of tolerance' (Raghavan, 2009; Kashukshi, 2009). However, the government allowed for the closing of so-called 'unlicensed gyms' for women. Women are not allowed to drive a car and cannot make any decision on their own; they are treated as legal minors (Reuters, 2009). This creates a confused picture of the status of women.

Important in Saudi Arabia's PD, is the funding as described earlier. There are not always strings attached but according to Dore Gold in his book "Hatreds Kingdom" this is not necessary, since many institutions and countries for fear of losing the access to the money, choose to become more conservative (2004).

PD in Saudi Arabia is strongly related to its immediate country interests. The Saudi Press Agency provides government sanctioned information. It can be accessed through the internet (SPA, 2009). Saudi Arabia undertakes its initiatives on its own. An exception to this is the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Republic of Senegal

General introduction

Senegal is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean (west), Mauritania (north), Mali (east) and Guinea and Guinea-Bissau (south). Even though the population of Senegal is for 96% Islam, it does not consider itself an Islamic state. Christians and those with traditional beliefs make the remaining 4%. In 1895 Senegal officially became a French colony with Saint Louis as the capital. On April 4, 1960 Senegal became an independent state (Anon., 2007, p. 43559).

Senegal has a democratically elected government under the leadership of President Abdoulaye Wade, who was re-elected in February 2007. According to the Constitution of January 2001, Senegal has a unicameral parliament and the president's term is five years (Anon., 2007, p. 43559). The Constitution proclaims Senegal as a secular, democratic and social republic. The

most important institution is the presidency. Other important institutions are the Government, the National Assembly, the Constitutional Committee, the State Committee and the Supreme Court of Appeal.

All Senegalese are equal under the law. Exemplary is the fact that even though the majority of the population is Muslim, they never rejected President Senghor who was a Catholic and belonged to one of the smaller ethnic groups. There is no official state religion in Senegal. The Constitution states clearly that there is division between State and Religion and there are guarantees for freedom of expression (Boyle and Sheen, 2003, pp. 58-59). Major industries are in food processing as well as mining. Tourism is a developing sector (Anon., 2007).

The majority of the Senegalese converted to Islam during the past two centuries. Before then there was a small group of Muslims with their origin in Baghdad called Khadir. They had converted to Islam more than a millennium ago. These Muslims spread Islam all over the country. Their success during the 19th and early 20th century was mostly due to Islam becoming a symbol for the resistance to the French colonization.

There are four major ethnic groups in Senegal and six language groups. The Wolof are the majority; their language is the most spoken one. The second largest group are the Halpulaar, they are very strong Muslims. The third group are the Sereer, they are in majority Muslims, but also include other faith groups, such as Christians.

The second religion in Senegal is Christianity (Boyle and Sheen, 2003, pp. 58-59). The smallest ethnic groups is formed by the Joola, who like the Sereer, have a mix of religions, including a group that holds indigenous animist beliefs. There is also a small group of more restrictive and rigorous Muslims in Senegal, revivalist Islamist, whose followers are mostly Arab speaking.

Sufism has strongly influenced Senegalese Islam through its brotherhoods. The largest brotherhood is the Tijane. Sufism is a branch in Islam whose practices are based on spiritualism and mysticism. The sources for the mysticism are the Holy Qur'an, but also the religious traditions from other religions. Because of the spiritualistic influence, Islam influenced by Sufism is usually more open and accepting of others. It has no inclinations for violence or repression (Farugi, 2009).

Foreign Policy and Vision

It is very important for Senegal to identify with the French speaking community; not only on a cultural level but including areas of economy, politics and defense. One of the most important principles of their foreign policy is to preserve and strengthen the greater French speaking community. Also of importance to them is regional integration and development which led to their membership of the WAEMU.

Senegal is committed to peaceful conflict resolution (Schraeder, 2001, pp. 43-44). Relations with the western world are of equal importance to Senegal as relations with the Islamic world. Senegal strongly condemned the attacks of September 11, 2001. They provided the OIC a stage to present their views during the 2008 meeting (Gierczynski-Bocande, 2007). Senegal has been a member of the United Nations since its independence. They are members of ADB, ECOWAS, G-77, AU among others. They are signatories to the Law of the Sea and member of WTO and the ICC. They have representations on all continents, except for Australia. They are known for their diplomatic efforts in bringing about peace at their own borders as well as between others. They are participating in the ECOWAS peacekeeping efforts in Côte d'Ivoire.

The president is a strong advocate for more assistance from the developed countries to the developing world. He was the only African president to condemn Mugabe on his handling of the elections in 2008. When dealing with the West, he is a tough negotiator. He is the only president who took strong action against the perceived overfishing by the EU in African waters. Senegal was the only Francophone country that was part of Tony Blair's visits as prime-minister.

Senegal's view of the West

Considering the importance the relations with the West have in the foreign agenda, it can be concluded that for the government the West is important for trade and aid. In general Senegalese see western culture as the opposite of their own, placing materialism first and dignity last, while in Senegal this is the other way around (Riccio, 2001). Senegalese do not agree with the perception and portrayal of Islam by the West. Senegal is member of the OIC and during the 11th session of the Islamic Summit Conference, which took place in Dakar in March 2008, the Senegalese Foreign Minister was very clear on how to deal with Islamophobia. Senegal is of the opinion that promoting the authentic image of the Islam should be a joint effort of all members of the OIC. Islamophobia should be eradicated (Anon., 2008).

Senegal's image in the West

Over time Senegal was seen as a good trading spot and Islam became the religion of the rebels in Senegal. Currently Senegal is seen as one of the few democratically ruled states in Africa with a Constitution that guarantees freedom of expression and of religion. Senegal does not make it to the headlines often. However, from articles and books written on Senegal it can be concluded that Senegal is viewed by the West as one of the most western oriented countries in Africa; it is ranked as partly free according to the Freedom in the World 2009 table (Freedom House, 2009). It is one of only five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that have democratic elections in a multi-party system (Anon., 1991, p. 1). The fact that there is no compulsion in religion, also reflects favorably on Senegal.

A specific stereotype can not be found, but because little is known about the country, it shares in all the negative stereotypes for Muslims and Africans. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to around 4% of the global Muslim population (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2009). In Europe many Senegalese are described as traders that you can not depend on, poor and undocumented immigrants who can be victimized, are either weak or violently criminal (Riccio, 2001).

Senegal's image to be portrayed

Senegalese see themselves as good traders and savers. Those who work overseas invest substantially in their own country. Senegalese at home admire the Senegalese migrants. Testimony to this are the many songs about Senegalese migrants, describing them as heroes. The president has voiced the opinion that his country is a model society for the rest of the world, especially the Islamic world. He wants people all around the world to experience Islam as it is experienced in Senegal, in a positive, accepting and non-violent manner.

Tools and Strategies used

Senegal is one of the countries that voiced a very strong condemnation for the September 11 attacks, just like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia. Perhaps the PD vision from Senegal is evident from its choice to host the OIC Summit twice; the last time in March 2008. President Abdoulaye Wade made it clear that this was intentional. The president wants Senegal to be the example of tolerance for the West as well as for the Muslim world (Anon., 2008). In interviews regarding issues surrounding Islamophobia, the Senegalese president shows himself to be a moderate thinking leader. Except for hosting conferences and expressing views that project an image of an Islamic country that has successfully balanced an African

culture, Islamic religion with the Western modernity, Senegal does not undertake other global public activities to project the correct image of Islam. The MFA does operate a website.

Senegal, unlike the other three countries presents itself as a secular republic, not as an Islamic one. This could be a reason why it does not have a need for Islamic diplomacy as a country. Senegal is satisfied with its relationship with the West and does not feel directly challenged by the current negative image of Islam in the West. Senegal does not have to fight extremism at home and does not have to explain the gap between the image and the reality. Since PD is usually born out of necessity, and there is no immediate need in Senegal, there is no strong PD. Senegal does recognize the global problem with the image of Islam and shows willingness to assist in a coordinated group campaign, by sharing their success. It has expressed its willingness to work with the OIC.

There are initiatives, cultural promotion, by Senegalese citizens to contribute towards a positive image of Islam. An example is the Senegalese singer Yousou N'Dour, who participated in the 'Voices of the Muslim World festival' held in New York in 2009, and explained that he wanted to change the perception of Islam in the world through his songs. Artists have taken on themselves to be cultural ambassadors for their country and Islam (Anon., 2005). Recently N'Dour released a documentary dealing mostly with the situation after 09/11, in which he argues for an "evolving Islam" (Anon., 2009). Senegal is a country that is probably in one of the best positions to promote a positive image of Islam, only just because they live it.

From the profiles presented in this chapter a clear picture of the interests of each country as well as their reality in relation to the desired image of Islam has emerged. The role and presence of PD in the diplomacy strategies of each country has also been determined. These results will be further analyzed in the next chapters.

Chapter 3

Public Diplomacy and the image of Islam

An in-depth look at the use of PD in relation to the Islamic image

Introduction

This chapter will focus on how each country uses PD with regard to the improvement of the image of Islam. The PD per country will be analyzed and compared.

Comparison

Jordan and Malaysia

The only thing that Jordan and Malaysia have in common is Sunni Islam. All others, such as their geographic location, the influence of pre-Islamic cultures and history are completely different. Jordan's most famous PD activity regarding Islam to date is the Amman message, which is a religious message. The bulk of the message was intended for the Muslim world. The Amman message was supported with the Amman interfaith message, which promoted a lasting peace between Christians, Jews and Muslims. It does not include non-Abrahamic faiths and in doing so excludes 40% of the world population. Because of this it could never aspire to contribute to world peace and acceptance of and by all.

Analyzing the impact of the message it seems that it did reach the media and the West for a moment, but then disappeared. One of the reasons for this is a weak media strategy. Jordan is also involved in interreligious dialogues through the Royal Institute for Religious Studies and one of the Princes even got an award for his achievements. But at a closer look the messages they present at interreligious meetings are only directed towards the Muslim world and not trying to engage with the West. Also to note, is the lack of community involvement. Even with the interreligious dialogue, there are no sizable community level activities in Jordan

itself. Dialogue should be a conversation, meaning an open discussion of ideas. With the severe limits on freedom of speech, it seems very unlikely that any real dialogue can ensue between the government and its people. The major problem with the Amman message and other PD efforts of Jordan is that it presents the image of Islam as Jordan wishes it to be, but this is in contrast to the domestic reality of many Islamic countries.

Focussing on the messengers of the PD in Jordan, it is clear that all initiatives and the implementation thereof are by the Royal family. This does add value and authority to the message, but at the same time alienates the common people. There is no dialogue possible. Who would dare to argue with the King, when you risk being killed for lack of respect. For the West however, the King and Queen are very acceptable and suitable messengers for high level initiatives. They are capable of addressing the West in a manner that is understandable and comfortable to western audiences. The strongest messenger is Queen Rania, just because she is a women and living contradiction to the Muslim women stereotype.

Mass media are used on a high level by Jordan. They make use of the social networking sites online and of webpages for special messages and to present themselves. This allows them the opportunity to interact with people from all over the world. The sites have features that support participation and dialogue. The Jordanians also have access to CNN and BBC and other prestigious news and 'talk show' providers in the West.

When it comes to networking, it is apparent that the Amman message did not succeed in relationship building between Muslim and non-Muslim on a grand scale; except between religious scholars from different countries. It was endorsed by most Muslim countries, but not by any Western. It is not owned by the public, whether in the Muslim world or the West. It was a well meant initiative, but without proper follow-up. The same goes for the interfaith dialogues, no impact on the general impression of Islam can be registered yet.

Finally it can be noted that Jordan has relatively intensive contact with the West and modified its message in order to fit a format for the West. It should also be noted that even though the Amman message is a very well meaning initiative, it fails to take into account that the world is a multicultural place where any message has to be 100% inclusive to be succesful. Also the mere expression of a message of peace does not bring peace, it has to be part of a long-term plan including a bottom-up approach and allowing for full and free participation of all stakeholders.

Malaysia's 'Islam Hadhari' formed part of an election campaign and was initially meant for domestic consumption. Then it was recognized as an philosophy that could assist in shaping the image to the West. However, no real efforts were made to present it to the West. It was only endorsed by the OIC.

Malaysia is known for supporting interfaith dialogue, and there are many NGOs active in this field. There is opportunities for consultations and active campaigning at the grassroots level through interreligious dialogues. These NGOs are not initiated by the government. Media coverage of dialogues is very meager. Malaysia shows some interaction with the West on these dialogues. Between 2001 and 2008 there was frequent activity in this field.

Due to remarks by some of the Ulema council in 2006 that Islam did not allow for interfaith dialogue, domestic interfaith dialogue was actively discouraged by government. As registered by some researchers in the field of interfaith dialogue, the Malaysian government since then promoted silence instead of dialogue when it came to issues of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. A planned international interfaith dialogue to take place in the country in 2007 was cancelled by the government at the last minute.

On an international stage the Malaysian government keeps advocating for interreligious dialogue. There is an international interfaith dialogue planned for 2010 in Malaysia, intended for youth of Europe and Malaysia and supported by the ministry of Youth and Sports and the State Government of Malaka. However, the earlier observations still provide reason for doubt on the true commitment of the Malaysian government to interfaith and intercultural dialogue. The challenge is that it is becoming more apparent everyday that the image Malaysia is portraying is contrary to the domestic reality. Some of the NGO activity is out of a fear for the further islamization of Malaysia, they are part of the struggle to keep the secular constitution and resist the further marginalizing of other faiths.

Messengers in Malaysia for 'Islam Hadhari' were political party leaders. This could lead to the message becoming politicized and perceived as a disguise for an ugly truth. However, in Malaysia there are also voices to be heard from the general public through the NGOs. Government led PD however, in the form of the interfaith dialogues leaves no room for the common people. Attendees of these conferences are highlevel officials, but never the highest level, leaving room to speculate that the message is not fully supported by government or at least is not of the highest priority. The messengers of Malaysia are not known in the West. And there is no female messenger involved.

Mass media are only reached by Malaysia when there are negative developments to highlight. The Malaysian government does not seem to have the appeal to the Western mass media as the Jordanians have. They do make use of internet for advertising tourism and e-government, but not for active dialogue on interfaith issues.

Processes of relationship building and networking are in the Malaysian situation a little different, the need for a good understanding between people of different religions and a positive image of Islam is shared by the majority of the people. They are however, not a part of the government initiatives or resulting thereof. The activities by the government have up till now not led to relationship building between Muslims and non-Muslims, not in Malaysia, nor in the rest of the world.

Malaysia is more concerned with her immediate environment, the ASEAN, and is not really making efforts to involve the West in interreligious dialogues or 'Islam Hadhari'. The credibility of Malaysia's promotion of interfaith dialogues is in question, since it is contrary to the positions the government takes in country on issues regarding faith and culture.

Sending a message of peace and peaceful co-existence is more urgent for Jordan than for Malaysia. Just because of their geographic location, their population composition, so for their mere survival. For Malaysia it seems to have more to do with remaining an attractive destination for business with the West, it has to come across as safe and inhabitable for all. More importantly, by increasing their economic attractiveness they could pave the road to a leadership role in organisations such as the ASEAN and OIC.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia

The similarities between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are in that they both practice Sunni Islam and are Arab countries with 'authoritarian regimes'. However, there are definite differences in the PD they practice.

The Sunni Islam in Saudi Arabia, a result of the school of Salafism, is also called Wahhabism. Before 9/11 it was not so important to Saudi Arabia how they were perceived in the western world since the West, especially the USA, were tied to them because of their huge oil resources and other strategic interests. After 9/11 however, their image was greatly dented and Saudi Arabia felt the urge to repair its image and implicitly the image of Islam. The reason for this image problem could be found in the fact that most of the terrorists were Saudi citizens. The worst is that Osama bin Laden is a Saudi from a very wealthy Saudi family. Terrorists could be linked to educational institutes, madrassas that were funded by the Saudis. The Saudi

government denied ties to terrorism, but it has to be said that there were many indications of the contrary. Wahhabism is, even among Muslims and certainly in non-Muslim countries, not popular and not appreciated, since it is seen as very strict and in some cases, intolerant , aggressive and militant.

As a result of this it is no surprise that the mere expression of a message of peace by Saudi Arabia will not easily be believed nor open up doors for them into other countries. Sending a message by Saudi Arabia therefore is accompanied by an image of a huge donor. Giving huge donations worldwide, but mostly to Muslim countries opens up doors and creates a willingness to listen to the message of the correct Islam as seen by Saudi Arabia. Wahhabism in its purest form has been identified by many, including Muslims, as the foundation of extremism and terrorism. Saudi Arabia is still funding the academic study of this branch of Islam. For this they send their own scholars abroad to teach. The argument that they do not support the extremist form of Wahhabism but only the academic form, does not hold completely. They are aware that the reason why they can avoid the academic form to turn into the extremist form in their country is because of the authoritarian rule. When they fund the export of these theories to non-authoritarian countries all repressive measures to keep it under control disappear. Saying that it is not their responsibility is unacceptable, they know the consequences but still they fund it.

For this reason PD efforts of Saudi Arabia in the humanitarian sphere, even though positive for the beneficiaries, will always be viewed with suspicion. The suspicion is that behind the humanitarian aid is the hidden agenda for the spread and support for Wahhabism. It has to be noted that even prestigious institutes in the West have accepted Saudi funding, such as Harvard and the Clinton Foundation. However, it should be clear that Saudi donations are not by definition supporting terrorism and it is recognized that the government has systems in place to have more control over the funds that are sent overseas for social causes. But the fact that there is no transparency in this administration is again cause for suspicion.

In contrast to Jordan's use of modern technology in the PD efforts, Saudi Arabia uses them very scarcely. The government does have websites and Samirad also, but for the rest there is no real interaction through modern communication tools. While in Jordan Queen Rania is very important and visible in dealing with the stereotypes regarding women, in Saudi Arabia there is no female involvement. During the past year, the Saudi King made headlines with positive efforts such as the opening of the co-ed university, a female minister and recently the

abolishment of a caning verdict. At the same time female gyms were banned. This sends a message of contradiction and ambivalence.

It is clear that the Saudi government is more hesitant in its vocal and visible PD efforts on improvement of the image of Islam. Particularly on issues regarding human rights, especially women's rights, and the use of modern technology. Possible explanations for this can be found in the conservative Wahhabi Islam which does not take well to new developments or technologies of any sort. And that in this centuries old conservative environment, the government chooses to be very cautious with the introduction of modernity. Or it could be that the government does not want to modernize out of fear for loss of power, and are trying to mask that reality by taking some positive actions. Whatever the case, Saudi Arabia's desired image is even farther from their domestic reality, than in the case of Jordan.

Senegal and the three others

The majority of the Senegalese population is Muslim, from one of the Sufi brotherhoods. This is a major difference with the three other countries studied. The efforts of Senegal are much more low-key than of the other three countries studied. In Senegal the government does not place emphasis on Islamic diplomacy or PD for the country itself. This can easily be understood since Senegal is a secular country and even though the majority is Muslim, there is freedom of religion and a good relationship between government and citizens. There is no internal need for proving the existence of a peaceful image of Islam.

However, Senegal acknowledges the global problem the image of Islam is encountering. They are willing to participate in efforts of the OIC. It is completely understandable that Senegal takes this position on the one hand, they have nothing to prove. But it could also be that they take this position in order to remain under the radar of extremist who may want to disrupt their peaceful community. The fact that Senegalese artists take initiative to spread the positive Islam as Senegal views it, shows the pride they take in being Senegalese Muslims and the need they recognize to change the image of Islam for the better in the West. This could be due to a feeling of shared responsibility with the rest of the Muslims. However, it could also be due to a realization through the many Senegalese abroad, of the changed treatment and perception of Senegalese Muslims in the West.

OIC

All the countries studied are members of the OIC and especially Malaysia and Senegal have on more than one occasion called on the OIC to lead the campaign for a positive image of Islam. The activities from the past years show a realization in the OIC of the need to involve

itself in the global issue with the image of Islam. The organisation has an Islamophobia monitoring division that reports regularly on incidents involving Muslims in the West. However, after reading through some of the reports it became apparent that the reports are fairly one-sided, listing only incidents that involve non-Muslims towards Muslims. The ‘Abdoulmuttalab’ failed bombing for example was not mentioned as an act against Islam. It was only mentioned under the positive acts of an Muslim organisation in the USA who apologized for it and condemned the act. This kind of reporting does not show a true willingness to acknowledge the problem within, but more a desperate effort to hide that by focussing on the non-Muslims their actions against Muslims.

The organisation has a 10 year plan of which a great part deals with how to change the image of Islam. However, there are many activities listed, but not in very much detail. The funding is by the memberstates themselves, but the contributions are voluntarily. This gives no guarantee for implementation. Up till now there has been only one interfaith dialogue on the initiative of the OIC. In all actions suggested, there is a sense of a lack of the most needed fundamental building blocks that should be included in order to be succesful. During the last meeting of the OIC Ministers of Information in Morocco, it was recognized by the King of Morocco that: ‘Information is the weapon of modern times’.

It was also recognized that there is a crucial need for involving foreign media. OIC is an umbrella organisation for Islamic countries and viewed by many of its members as the best leader for a united campaign for a positive image of Islam. OIC however, does not have any structured cooperation with non-Islamic bodies, except for the UN. From the activities listed in the 10 year plan, one also gets the impression that while the Islamic countries call on the OIC to lead the campaign, the OIC when developing actions, gives the responsibility back to the countries.

Summing up

At the end of this chapter we can conclude that all four countries think it is necessary to portray the correct image of Islam. They all believe this should be an image of a peace loving and respectful religion. However the way they do it is different. It can be noted that all these countries in which ever way are making an effort to portray and reflect what each considers as the correct image of Islam to the world. They do this using the tools they have available and using methods effective and known in their communities, in a way they are comfortable with and reflecting their culture.

Senegal shows little inclination for the use of PD on presenting the correct image of Islam, there is no internal pressure for this. This is different for the other countries, where several interests, such as internal security, economy and image as well as influence regionally and globally, are affecting their decisions and actions in the field of PD. The OIC seems to have just realized that there is a problem but is not ready to address it.

But do they realize enough that this message needs to penetrate a part of the world with an often very different culture of communication and with very little or no real knowledge of the religion of Islam and the actual lifestyles in the non-Western world? In the next chapter we will examine the messages sent by these countries from the receiver's point of view.

CHAPTER 4

Message effectiveness

Introduction

The event of 9/11 has produced global consequences that perhaps exceed the greatest expectations of its perpetrators, and this is the paradox we may consider as we examine the consequences of that event. Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, it seems that whenever we follow newsbroadcast in the West, such as CNN and BBC, Islam is in the news. Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine provide us an image of rebellious Muslims leaving no stone unturned to have it their way, no lives are spared and no rights are respected. Suicide killings such as recently at Fort Wood in the USA or in Afghanistan at CIA headquarters cements the perception that Islam causes and supports terrorism.

Other news that reaches the West has to do with the increased influence of Sharia law in the Muslim world. Many do not even know what Sharia law is, but stories as the stoning to death and caning of women for minor offences in the eyes of the West as well as withholding women their basic human rights, become the descriptive terms for Sharia law. Reports of female genital mutilation and ‘honor’ killings are what closes the deal in the opinion of many of the West on Islamic law and regulations. Add to that a growing concern in especially Europe, regarding the increasing numbers of the Muslim population in their countries. All this results in an image of Islam influenced by a mixture of fear and fact.

Western history adds its own through the teachings about brutal attacks by the Muslims centuries ago. Issues of great concern to the West have historically been: separation between Church and State, civil liberties as well as the status of women in the Islamic world.

Facts and Fiction

According to a survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, there are 1.57 billion Muslims in the world, amounting to 23% of the total global population. Over 60% of all Muslims live in Asia and 20% in the Middle-East and North Africa. Europe's Muslim population amounts to 5% of the European population and a little over 2% of the world's Muslim population (Anon., 2009). In the Americas, Suriname has the largest Muslim population percentage (15.9%) (Anon., 2009, p. 25) while the biggest number of Muslims live in the USA and in Argentina.

Prognoses for the coming years show that due to several factors, migration of Muslims to the West will continue, but not at the alarming level often portrayed. In Europe the Muslim population will at most double by 2020, increasing from the current 5.2% to 10% Muslims as a total of the European population (Anon., 2009, p. 22; Jenkins, 2006). The fears of Muslims taking over cultural, social and religious life is therefore exaggerated and unfounded.

The impressions of Sharia law cannot be ignored nor dismissed. All Sharia court rulings seen in recent times seem to be to the disadvantage of women and children. Interpretation differs per country and there is no regulatory body that determines the true interpretation. The horrific and primitive way in which sentences are carried out remains forever ingrained in western minds as well as in those of the moderate Muslims.

Suicide bombings, killings and murder attempts carried out by so-called 'Muslim' extremists and terrorists leading to the death of innocent civilians and those who have a different opinion about Islam, are facts presented daily by media.

The opinion voiced at the UN by the Islamic countries to forbid and punish any criticizing of the Islamic religion and habits, so-called defamation, rang alarmbells with many western nations. Freedom of speech is considered one of the most precious pillars of democracy in the West. It is no surprise that this proposal is receiving less and less support at the UN (Pulliam Bailey, 2009; Briand, 2009; Araujo, no date; Anon., 2009).

The image as if in every Muslim hides a terrorist is incorrect. In Suriname, the country with the largest muslim population percentage in the western hemisphere, there is no sign of Muslim extremism, nor do Surinamese feel that Islam is a religion of hatred. Muslims are no different from any other group in Suriname and like all Surinamese participate fully in the social, religious and political life of the country. Results from a recent Gallup World poll (Mogahed, no date) show that only 7% of Muslims worldwide condone terrorist acts. Therefore it is unfounded to characterize Muslims as terrorists. It is also a fact that just like in any religion and culture, Islam is not one but as diverse as any other.

Even though most of the ideas about Islam in the West fall under stereotyping, some are rooted in experiences and daily media images. Except for the already mentioned impressions of Islam that influence the image of Islam, there are some added issues that lead to a very poor image of Islam in the West. Religious intolerance exists in many Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, where it is not allowed to build churches or to practice a different religion. Another example of this intolerance was shown recently through incidents in Malaysia over the use of the word ‘Allah’.

Another important image determining factor is the status of women. According to Western standards and basic human rights, women in the Muslim world are robbed of their rights and treated as legal minors. The traditional dress of some Muslim women, the full-face veil, is for westerners the symbol of oppression. Independent Muslim women are viewed by many in the West as exceptions, not as the rule.

Democracy, or the absence thereof is strongly associated with the Islamic world. The absence of the freedom of choice, expression and speech in many Islamic societies reflects very negative on the Islamic image. The content of documents such as the ‘ The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights’ solidifies the negative impressions of Islam in the West. There are not many examples of democratic Islamic countries known to the West. All these images and issues are generalized and accepted as ‘typically’ Muslim.

Image war

Other important factors leading to the current image of Islam in the West are the *terror and media campaigns* by organisations such as Al Qaeda, Jemaiah Islamiyah and others. Al Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden, is the most infamous group. They make use of all media available to spread the message. Their strongest tools apparently are terror campaigns consisting of suicide bombings, killings and other kinds of horrific attacks. Their aim is on multiple levels:

force all living in the Muslim countries and majority Muslim countries to have a certain lifestyle as approved by them; to drive all Western powers back to the West; silence all criticism of anything Muslim, by force. Their ultimate goal: the spreading of fear.

In the West there are *political developments* based on the existing image of Islam. These movements assist in and profit from a negative image of Islam. In the Netherlands and other countries in Europe there is an increased strength and influence of the far-right parties (Kimmelman, 2010). In the USA, the recently increased security measures are mostly aimed at citizens from Muslim countries.

The western media plays a major role in this, by associating the word 'Muslim' with every culprit with the Muslim religion. Non-Muslim criminals are not religiously identified.

The initiatives taken by moderate Islamic leaders as well as by some western leaders to defuse the stereotypes and present a different and positive image of Islam, receive minimal media attention. They are mostly referred to as evidence of misconceptions and dangerous ideas in combatting terrorism.

There is an ongoing *war of image within Islamic groups* as well as with the West. It is clear that the negative images and stereotypes receive far more attention, are more accepted and are much stronger in the western world than are the messages of peaceful co-existence and non-violence. The reasons for this could be that the peaceful messages are unknown to the West, or it could be that it sells better to show images of war instead of images of peace. It could be that it is in the interest of policy makers in the Muslim world and the West to keep this animosity growing. Or it could be that the frequency of good news can just not compete with the frequency and impact of bad news. In other words the fight against the negative portrayal of Islam is not strong enough to overcome and silence the negative image projectors. And so the image portrayed by a minority in Islam, has taken hold of the majority in the West. Islam is a threat!

Results to be expected

If Islam is still perceived as a threat by many and thus has a negative image and brand, does that mean that all those peace spreading initiatives were complete failures? Before answering this question it is important to realize again which challenges initiatives for creating a positive image have to overcome. It is also important to clearly understand which results are reasonable to expect from them. As already mentioned there are many forces at work in shaping and influencing the image of Islam. As from any image creation or rectifying

campaign the expected results are that the basic message sent by the campaign prevails over the negative information regarding the product, country or in this case the religion. In the least favourable circumstances it should at least result in skepticism towards negative portrayal.

A successful public diplomacy campaign for Islam should not be expected to end all negativity towards the image, but it should plant at least a seed of reasonable doubt in the minds and hearts of those with the most negative perceptions by providing accurate and relevant information about the religion. The goal has to be to minimize the fear and susceptibility to Islamophobia. At least people should begin to consider the other viewpoint and understand the complexity of the issue which, over time, could lead to a deeper understanding.

Challenges

Globally there are many peacebuilding activities undertaken which aim at an improved image of Islam. A survey by the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice (Smock and Ul Huda, 2009) showed that in Africa and the Balkan area only, there are already fifty Muslim organisations active in peacebuilding efforts. The initiatives we are studying in this thesis are just a few of the many worldwide. Why then do we hardly ever hear about these positive acts?

The biggest challenge is not efficient use of the media, but also creating an understanding and interest in peacebuilding activities in influential media circles. My research shows that the Amman message was only once or twice mentioned on the BBC and at the most once at CNN. There could be two reasons for this: either Jordan did not involve the western media or the western media was not interested. In case Jordan did not involve the western media in the Amman message presentation, this shows a failure on the part of Jordan to understand the importance of the western media in influencing western publics.

It would be advised to design a media strategy, which includes the western media, to avoid these kinds of failures. In case the media did not show interest, it is important for Jordan to find out the reasons why and to design a strong media strategy for communicating with the West. In any case it shows the need for an improved media strategy.

Interfaith dialogues which take place all over the world are never highlighted and probably would only reach the news if the Pope was attacked during one of them. The recent banning of minarets by the Swiss did not do as much damage to the Swiss image as it did to that of Islam. It served to remind the West that Islamic countries are not tolerant towards other religions. Many headlines were based on this stigma (Kimmelman, 2010). Actually, the Swiss

cannot be blamed for this, it is proof of the challenge placed on the image of Islam by the domestic situation in many Islamic countries. In the world we live in people more and more base their acceptance on reciprocity.

CNN and BBC are the biggest tv news mass media available in the West. Because of their status and reach in the West, they will have to be part of any mass media campaign; especially for the image of Islam. Currently however, the western media is largely biased towards reporting on Islam and the few exceptions do not change that perception (Mohit, 2010).

The same bias is experienced in the printed mass media. When terror acts are perpetrated by non-Muslims there is no religious identification, but as soon as the perpetrator is Muslim or somehow related to Islam, he/she is immediately religiously identified. There are examples of this every day: the man in Atlanta who shot three of his colleagues and then himself was not religiously identified, but the very same day when the Nigerian Abdoul Muthallab went to court he was identified as the “Muslim” man. In the recent killing spree in Australia of Indian students, none of the perpetrators is racially and/or religiously profiled by the media. None of the international media is making an effort to seriously address who are behind these killings. This behaviour is experienced daily in most of the western media. The media especially mass media in the West is a huge and very difficult challenge, but it has to be dealt with in an effective way. The importance of a strong media strategy can therefore not be overstated.

Domestic situation

The next challenge is the domestic situation in the Muslim world. The structure of the domestic situation is under their control. Not much about these countries is known to the West, except for the images presented by the western media. As already stated, these broadcasts mostly reconfirm the negative images and ideas that are already widely existent in the West. The countries studied all have a situation at home that doesn't reflect the image they would like to present for Islam. Efforts to make changes for the good, however small, are usually not highlighted. In case they are brought to the public's attention, it is in a very short article, that appears once and is never spoken of again.

Jordan's struggle with extreme Salafism and its precarious balancing act on the Palestine-Israeli conflict are very rarely covered. All issues that Jordan has with human rights advocates however are widely known. The Amman message, however, also meant as a tool in the struggles, is mostly unknown to the West, probably because of a weak overall PD strategy. In

Saudi Arabia, there are also some positive developments, the government has since some years decided not to support the revolutionary wing of Salafism anymore, but only the academic wing (Escobar Stemmann, 2008). Domestically they have regulations in place to control the revolutionary distribution of ideas. It is a different situation abroad, where democracy allows for freedom of speech and thus lacks the ability to keep these groups under control. Saudi Arabia has a new tv channel to promote the positive image of Islam. They run reform schools for people with radical beliefs. But not much of these efforts reach the western mass media. The Saudis as the Jordanians have a lot to do when it comes to living up to the universal standards for human rights, women's rights, freedom of speech and religious freedom.

Malaysia's internal situation is characterized by 'malays' having a preferential status, a country that is officially not a Muslim country but has been branded as such by previous leaders. It is a multicultural country that wants to be perceived as modern and religiously tolerant. The current image however is severely under pressure because of religious intolerance towards Christians and Hindus. The notion that the government is deliberately not acting to stop the attacks, cannot be dismissed. Malaysia also has to improve its image with regard to human rights issues.

Senegal is the only country in these case studies that is not mentioned by Human Rights Institutions for violations of human rights. The country is not often in the news. Senegal does know an influx in recent years of Salafism, but is using its existing laws to minimize their influence. Senegal is contrary to the other countries, a democratic republic, secular and with one law for all. This is probably why Senegal has no human rights issues. Two of the other countries have authoritarian regimes, have Islam as official religion, and in the case of Malaysia, a discriminating system towards different ethnicities and limitations on freedom of expression.

What was successful?

Based on the research it can be concluded that the Amman message has scored some success. It was successful in establishing a network within the Islamic world of prestigious scholars and leaders, supporting a message of peace and understanding by the Islam. It was also successful in that it sent a signal to the western world showing a positive image of Islam.

Another success is in the follow-up with the 'Three Points' of the Amman message and later with the 'Common Word' campaign. The latter campaign reached all the way into the

Vatican. This resulted in the Pope organizing a new World Muslim Catholic Forum with this message at its base (Smock and Ul Huda, 2009).

That the Amman message did not go unnoticed in the West can be seen in that it was mentioned by western leaders, such as Tony Blair (Anon., 2007), as an example of the true meaning of Islam. It is also mentioned in several reports dealing with peace initiatives by the Muslim world (Smock and Ul Huda, 2009). It also forms part of studies in some western educational institutes.

However, there are important shortcomings in the Amman message as a PD effort by Jordan. One of the most important and crucial shortcomings, I believe to be the fact that the message has not permeated beyond the level of religious scholars and policy makers. It has not become part of the general public's information, it is not owned and understood by the people. This is the case for the Muslim world as well as for the West. Ownership of the content of the Amman Message is crucial if it is to be successful PD.

Another shortcoming is the top-down approach, which is clearly not working and is stuck now on a lateral level. Exposure, especially by the western media, is also limited. The websites only matter to those who are aware of the existence of the message. According to my own online survey, the majority of the people in the West, have never heard of it. It is clear that the Amman message has to be taken out from the global conference rooms and taken to the streets in the West and the Muslim world in order to create a global community of support and understanding.

Aside from the Amman message, Jordan has many more institutes and efforts actively engaged in promoting a peaceful image of Islam. As earlier mentioned the involvement of Queen Rania in the PD campaigns is indeed a very strong asset in the toolkit of Jordan. If Queen Rania can increase the number of women actively involved in the campaign, this would have a greater impact on the PD efforts. All current efforts, however, share the same challenges: exposure and community ownership.

Saudi Arabia's Peace Initiative as well as its initiatives and participation in Interfaith and Intercultural dialogues, go almost unnoticed in the western world. Sponsorship for humanitarian causes is often linked to religious influence and misses the ability to convince the western world of the tolerance of other faiths. The biggest challenge for Saudi Arabia is the image of women and human rights in general in the Kingdom. The image portrayed by the government during dialogues and other similar activities does not reflect the daily life in the

country. There are no supporting factors for the image presented. The country is closed to the eyes of the western public. Providing information and listening for feedback are very important for a successful PD campaign. Even more important is actively interacting with your own people as well as with the one you want to influence and this should not exclude those of a different religion or race.

Malaysia's campaign in promoting 'Islam Hadhari' has been successful in some Muslim countries and the philosophy was endorsed by the OIC. However, it helplessly stumbled on several occasions. Whereas 'Islam Hadhari', like the 'Amman message', gives a message of peace and tolerance, recent events in the country are not supporting this image. The burning of churches as a reaction to the decision of the court to allow Christians to use the word "Allah", is not supporting the image of Islam as a religion of peace and tolerance. The hesitation of the government to act which is interpreted as condoning of terror, only strengthens the image of an religiously intolerant country. The idea of 'Islam Hadhari' may have had some exposure in the Islamic world but not in the western world.

Senegal's approach is leaning more towards acting through international organizations instead of alone. Analyzing the government's stand on the promotion of the right image of Islam, it is clear that no structural efforts are made by the country itself. The Senegalese leadership calls upon the OIC to act.

SUGGESTIONS

The aforementioned facts shows that PD efforts by the countries in the case studies are incomplete and therefore not as effective as they could and should be. The image conflict between the portrayed and the actual, the limited use of and or access to western mass media and the mostly non-structured efforts, render these countries PD too weak to stand up against the current image of Islam. PD is partly defined by the words used, but even more importantly by the deeds supporting the message sent. If the four countries are serious about PD as a tool for portraying the positive image of Islam, they will have to adjust, renew and re-invigorate their campaigns.

The truth is that three of the countries have a lot to do domestically with regard to human rights, women's rights and freedom of speech. A credible PD campaign by these countries should take into account the current challenges posed by their political and judicial realities. It should be a reflection of credible life experience and aspirations of the population in these countries. The message sent to present the image of Islam should inform the western public

that the Middle Eastern, or African or Asian culture is of influence on the lifestyles in these countries.

I believe that differences in experience based on culture should form an important part of the message on the correct image of Islam conveyed to the West and freedom of speech, the right vs. the responsibility, should definitely be a discussion point. Freedom of speech is a basic human right, however, the experience and practice of it is very much influenced by the culture. The Danish cartoons for example, would never have been published in a Surinamese newspaper, that is not how Surinamese experience freedom of speech and opinion. I am sure they would never have been printed in an Indian newspaper. I base this on the recent ruling by a court in Mumbai regarding the banning of the book “Islam-A Concept of Political World Invasion by Muslims” (Deshpande, 2010). Personally, I fully agree with this ruling, since in my opinion freedom of speech is a undeniable right of every citizen, however, it should never be used to deliberately insult and humiliate fellow human beings.

The issue of women’s rights and the perception of the veil by the West should be discussed. Allowing the voices of especially Muslim women to be heard, would be a very strong tool. It should be explained that like any culture or religion, Islam is diverse. This is not different from other religions, the way Christmas is celebrated in Peru is different from how it is celebrated in the Netherlands or in Singapore. The shared basic foundations of Islam should be central to the image projection.

Finally the message should succeed in proving that terrorists are not only attacking the West, but even more so, they are attacking Islam. In order to gain the support of the own population and remain credible, the message should also force western powers to address their role in the current image. Most importantly, the message effectiveness will be highly dependent on the domestic situations in the countries involved. Their willingness to adhere to the universal principle of human rights through the applied justice and political systems. Failing to show this will seriously undermine any PD effort aiming at a positive image of Islam. As I stated before deeds speak stronger than words. In PD it is crucial to support the words of the message with deeds in order to enjoy credibility and make changes.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

One of the worst repercussions of 09/11 was the effect it had on the relationship between the Muslim world and the non-Muslim world. Animosity and distrust on a large scale. Western countries increased Public Diplomacy campaigns aimed at the Muslims and the Muslim world to defuse the perceived hatred towards the West, realizing this was to the detriment of security and economic interests.

Meanwhile in the West, the stereotype images of Muslims grew stronger and more vicious and the faith became even more equated with terrorism and extremism. This was not without consequences for those of the Muslim faith, whether in the Muslim world or in the West. It seemed logical that the Muslim countries would involve themselves in some campaign, at least on the diplomatic level to rectify this image of Islam and their citizens.

This research sought to find an answer regarding the issue whether Muslim countries are interested in actively pursuing a change of the current image of Islam and how, by asking the following questions:

- Do Muslim countries want to change the current image of Islam?
- How do they want to be viewed?
- Do they recognize PD as a tool in that effort?
- Are their PD efforts structured and effective
- What more should they do?

The focus was on four countries representative for the Muslim world. In the following paragraphs, the answers on these four questions will be presented.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

From the facts regarding the study of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, it can be concluded that Jordan is making efforts to contribute to a change in the current image of Islam in the West. Jordanians want to be perceived as very educated and technologically advanced and independent people. On several occasions, they have acknowledged PD as an important mechanism in bringing that changed image. It can also be concluded that their efforts are on different levels: in the area of philosophy (with the Amman message), interfaith dialogues (with the Royal academy for interfaith dialogue), hosting of international events in different areas of interest such as sports, economics, and peace.

However, it has to be concluded that not all these well-meant initiatives seem to be part of a cohesive plan. There is no clear media strategy. Another important weakness is also that their prime PD effort, the Amman message lacks an all-inclusive character. It only seeks for peace between the Abrahamic faiths.

Positive developments in the use of PD by Jordan that can be built on are:

- Jordan has bridged the gap for access to influential western media, evident in appearances on CNN (recently Queen Rania was the only representative of the Muslim world in a fundraising for Haiti by CNN), BBC and Oprah Winfrey's talk show.
- The messengers of Jordan's PD are accepted figures in the West and do add weight to the message.
- Jordan is the only country actively and effectively addressing the stereotypes of Muslim women. The impact of this is hampered by the domestic situation regarding especially honor killings. The condemnation of these is not supported by strict punishments for it in Jordan itself.
- The efforts however are globally recognized as steps in the right direction, evident in the follow-up that the Amman message had in the Vatican and the recognition of Prince Feisal by the IOC for his efforts to use sports to bridge cultural differences and bring gender awareness.

- Jordan is effectively using modern communication technologies for its PD efforts and is creating an improved environment to maximize these efforts. The promotion of the use of IT in Jordan will certainly benefit communication between cultures.

The conclusion is that Jordan's major challenges in the use of PD are that the message of the true meaning of Islam as presented by Jordan is not consistent with their own domestic situation. This domestic situation, lacking in democracy, also forms an obstacle for adequate listening to the people in determining a PD strategy for the country. There is no cohesive plan that includes all efforts and is supported by a strong media strategy. Another challenge is that the efforts are religiously discriminatory in their aim. The top-down approach for communicating in PD seems to be stuck on the layer of high-level religious and political dignitaries.

There is no real permeation of the layers below. This is a crucial problem, since for PD to work relationships have to be built between peoples, that is what makes it different from standard diplomacy and that is what gives it its ability to change minds. However, this is lacking in the Jordanian PD. The overall conclusion is that Jordan has succeeded in creating a favorable view of some Muslims in the West, but their efforts have not yet contributed to opening up the door to drastic change in the perception of Muslims by the West.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a strong advocate for changing the image of Islam worldwide. The Malaysians want to be the example of religiously tolerant and educated people. Malaysia views itself as exemplar of a pluralistic society with a majority Muslim community. There is no doubt that Malaysia recognizes the mechanism of PD as a valuable tool for bringing about this change. Its MFA structure shows probably the strongest signals of aiming for involvement of public and media. As seen in Jordan, the PD efforts have different focus areas, a philosophy of Islam, and the promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

It can be concluded that at the outset of the interfaith dialogues, there was a structure and planning involved, however, Malaysia has, since 2006, only promoted international interfaith dialogues. This leads to the conclusion that the ideology for the domestic situation is not a reflection of the image presented internationally. This is probably due to changes in the internal politics of Malaysia

The PD efforts of Malaysia are characterized by:

- A weak media strategy; there is no bridge to western media and there are no efforts made for this
- Limited sharing of ideas, only with the Muslim world
- Messengers of Malaysian PD are not connected with the West and do not appeal to the West
- The government does not involve local participation
- The message deals mainly with the connections between violence and Islam , as well as Islam and multiculturalism
- Malaysia does support international dialogue
- NGO activity in Malaysia supports image of intercultural tolerance.
- The environment allows for (under certain restrictions) participation and interaction with the West.

It has to be concluded that the efforts for the image of the country have sorted a positive effect up until now. Malaysia aimed to be seen as a multicultural haven and has succeeded in that. This is also evident in the number of tourists visiting the country, which has been increasing steadily over the past years. Currently however, this image is under threat, because the domestic reality of Malaysia has become public. This domestic reality is not supporting the image portrayed; instead, it is solidifying the image of Muslims as intolerant. This crack in the image is hurting the image of Islam. Malaysia has not been able to tip the scale in the West on the image of Islam towards the positive.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has the most difficult task of all four countries studied in changing the image of Islam in the West. The Saudis however, have stated the need for portraying the positive message of Islam. Saudis want to be perceived as a generous people and their country is the cradle of Islam. It can be concluded that if Saudi Arabia would be successful in changing its image in the Western world, that would have a dramatically positive effect on the all over image of Islam, but as long as Saudi Arabia carries the negative image it has now, it will be very difficult to change the overall image of Islam for anybody.

Saudi Arabia does recognize the power of information and so the value of PD in promoting the right image of Islam. The use of PD however is mostly incidental and not at all structured. In the cases that there are activities that qualify as PD they are characterized by:

- Absence of any media strategy
- There is only one messenger, the King. He is not the example of an appealing figure for the West.
- The major issue the efforts deal with is disconnecting Saudi Arabia from terrorism and dealing with the label of Wahhabism as an intolerant branch of Islam. The efforts to deal with the stereotypes of Muslim women are ambivalent.

The conclusion is that it will take a lot more than the current scarce efforts by Saudi Arabia to change the image of Islam. The number of Information Centers abroad, one in Tunisia and one in London, does not show any real commitment to engaging foreign publics. The ambivalent efforts dealing with the position of women fail to convince the West; they may raise some hopes that there is recognition of the need for change, but even stronger is the sense of fear to make the change. The biggest challenges for successful PD of Saudi Arabia are its domestic situation, links to terrorism and diversity as well as transparency in its donation policies.

Republic of Senegal

Senegal is the majority Muslim country that is a secular, democratic state. This makes it an exception in the whole study. It is also evident in its choice not to embark as a country on Islam related PD. Senegalese want to be recognized for being trustworthy traders who place humanity first. And, Senegal as a country views itself as the example for especially the Muslim world of a harmonious multi-religious society.

It can be concluded that Senegal does recognize the problem with the image of Islam globally. They are willing and able to assist efforts of OIC and others to address this. However, since they do not present the country as an Islamic state, they do not have PD as a country aimed at changing the image of Islam. President, Abdoulaye Wade, does have a positive reputation in the West as messenger for his country's ideas and positions. More exposure of Senegal would provide the West with a living example of a democratic African country with equal rights for all citizens under the law regardless of religion, where the people show a high level of tolerance. Senegal is a good example in establishing the positive image of Islam. It has to be

concluded that it is a deliberate choice of Senegal not to seek the spotlight to present this image globally and with high frequency.

OIC

All of the countries studied have called upon the OIC to pursue actively a change in the image of Islam in the West. However, it can be concluded that the OIC does not show readiness for the huge task at hand in changing the image of Islam. There is a 10-year plan dealing in part with the image of Islam and there is an Islamophobia monitor. The ten-year plan has not had any visible activity follow-up and the monitor presents one-sided reports on incidents regarding Muslims in the West. There is a lack of self-reflection to be observed and a lack of structured communication channels with the West. There is no standard budget to finance activities, which is a huge hurdle in planning PD on this scale. The one initiative in the UN supported by the OIC, the resolution on defamation had an opposite effect of what was actually intended. Instead of convincing the West of the need to protect any religion of vicious and unfounded attacks, it proved lack of understanding on the part of the Muslim countries of the importance of freedom of speech to the West. The best action at this point would be to withdraw this resolution from the UN. This lack of understanding of the West is very detrimental to PD that is meant to bridge differences between cultures. The OIC is definitely in need of a better understanding of the West, before they embark on PD towards the West.

Summing up

The Muslim world in majority believes that the current image of Islam should be rectified, even though the priority level is different between countries. Muslims want to be perceived as a group of peaceful people who deserve respect. The reason they want this change is in essence the same, they are of the opinion that Islam is a religion of peace, as the name of the religion indicates. Aside from that, the reasons for changing the image of Islam in the West vary from economic reasons to those related to security concerns. Some want to fit in with the West, others want to remain attractive for business with the West, while others see it as an opportunity to get a leadership position in the Muslim world.

It can be concluded that PD is recognized as a tool in the process of changing the image of Islam. Some MFA's have special departments dealing with this aspect and others, like Saudi Arabia, have placed the responsibility with the Ministry of Culture. Senegal's call on the OIC to campaign for the positive image of Islam shows that they also recognize it as an important

tool. Statements by leaders in the OIC and the Muslim world show a definite recognition for the need of PD to assist in changing the perception of Islam in the West

The most used strategies involve presentation of the philosophy of Islam and interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Their philosophies however differ. Jordan used philosophy and added a bridge to it, to involve the West. Malaysia did not do that. Saudi Arabia strategy is funding of humanitarian projects and the export of its philosophy on Islam. A few PD efforts show some structure, however, it is a poor structure. There does not seem to be a strategic connection and planning between it all.

I believe that all the efforts undertaken to restore the image of Islam deserve to be applauded, however based on the overpowering negative perception of Islam in the West we have to conclude that these initiatives are too weak and therefore not able to win the battle for an improved image of Islam.

The resulting change to the image of Islam proved to be minimal. Only one of the campaigns studied sorted effect in the West, at least on the level of religious and political leadership. The reaction of the Vatican is indicative for this. I am convinced that no activities undertaken are in vain, however they do not have a significant impact for a drastic image change.

Most important to realize is that this research did analyze the use of PD by different countries to change the stigma of their shared religious identity, that of being Muslims. I believe however, that whether strong or weak, one country's PD would never be able to change the image of Islam globally. In order to change the image of Islam permanently, a concerted effort is needed of all Muslim countries and Muslims in the West. This effort has to be supported with an investment of time and money. The foundation of the message has to be presented in unison by all who represent Islam to the West.

There are good initiatives in the Amman Message and Islam Hadhari, but they represent the view of a country or group within Islam. In order for any campaign to succeed globally, it has to originate from an umbrella organization of the Muslim world. In this case, that would be the OIC, however, the OIC is not yet ready to take on this task, and this creates a lack of coordination and loss of momentum in dealing with the image of Islam.

Changing the image of a religion is not something that has already been done in our modern times. Therefore, the Islamic countries do not have an example of how to do it. Nevertheless,

changing the image of Islam does require the same preparation and encounters at least the same limitations as any image changing campaign. The efforts studied show that there is still a need for further studying of the West in determining how to address the West in an effective manner.

Building bridges to the influential Western media is an important aspect that needs to be implemented. Worldwide organizations involved in interfaith dialogue complain about the lack of interest in the press for these events. Knowing this, the Muslim countries would have to launch effective media campaigns to involve the western media. There is currently no evidence of this being done.

The lack of democracy in many Islamic countries may provide them with a firm grip on the image to be portrayed, but at the same time is one of the greatest challenges in overcoming the negative image of Islam. It also shows a misunderstanding of PD on some occasions. Some countries confuse PD with propaganda that can mask the reality at home. The outcome of this and the harm it does to the image of Islam can be seen in the case of Malaysia.

The conclusion is that the methods used by all four countries are mostly inadequate or at best incomplete. The message each of them is sending about Islam is not permeating to the masses. The most crucial shortcomings can be summarized as follows:

- Message sent inconsistent with the daily reality
- Absence of univocal message
- All campaigns are fully controlled and executed through government.
- No permeating of information to the masses
- The use of popular media in the West is absent or very limited in the least
- There is no involvement of the general public, especially women, at home or abroad, no civic society networking
- No use is made of Muslim Diaspora in the West
- No use (or not enough) of art and other forms of expression to support the message
- Diplomats are not involved and active in spreading the message through PD activities by embassies of Muslim countries in the West.

If the above-mentioned challenges and results give the impression that Public Diplomacy is not effective in the change of the image of Islam, than that is incorrect. What it does prove however is, that there is more to be done in order for Public Diplomacy efforts to assist in a substantial change of the Islamic image.

The small successes up until now, resulting in support and greater understanding of Islam, even in the West, should be better structured. The current developments in the Muslim world signal changes for the better and provide strong ingredients to strengthen the message of positive Islam.

The use of western mass media at a high frequency is crucial in standing up against the wave of negative publicity. In this regard, the use of social media (Facebook, Twitter, Second Life, and My Space) should not be disregarded. It is more and more evident that social media is a great tool in getting the message out quickly, and across borders. The involvement of the citizenry and the Muslim Diaspora are necessary in providing more credibility to the message and carrying it to the public in the West and creating an effective engagement of all stakeholders.

The tools and strategies used should guarantee that all pillars for successful Public Diplomacy are met: listening, advocacy, cultural relations, exchanges, and international broadcasting. It has to be an integrated program. Countries have to set out a shared strategy to succeed in portraying Islam in a positive way to the West. Unified efforts will have a stronger impact. As described by Aijaz Zaka Syed: they have to “raise a storm” to turn the tide (2010). They also have to convince the West, especially Europe, that it is as important for them as for the Muslim world to counter extremist ideas in their countries. The world is a multicultural society and there are no exceptions to that. They have to recognize their role in the negative projection and change fear into celebrating diversity (Islam, 2010).

I am convinced that the time is right for a massive Public Diplomacy campaign by the Muslim world, for the change of image of Islam in the West. Interest in Islam is at an all-time high. In addition, Muslims are increasingly aware and willing to contribute to this change. Results are not to be expected in the short term, it is a process, but it has to be consistent and ongoing. This research does not aim to provide a blueprint for a successful Public Diplomacy campaign for changing the image of Islam. Its aim was to seek out if PD could serve as a valuable tool in bringing about a change in the view of Islam in the West.

Islamic countries will have to study all the above-mentioned crucial aspects and maybe even

more. If the results of those studies and strategies are transformed into a Public Diplomacy campaign, Public Diplomacy will prove itself as a crucial tool in the so much wanted image change in the Islamic world and the global quest for peace.

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