

December 2007

Examining Borat and His Influence on Society

Pauline Carpenter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/taboo>

Recommended Citation

Carpenter, P. (2017). Examining Borat and His Influence on Society. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 11 (1). <https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.11.1.05>

Examining Borat and His Influence on Society

Pauline Carpenter

Borat Sagdiyev is a controversial fictional character created and played by British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen. He is one of three fictional television host/journalists made up by Cohen in his HBO television series, *Da Ali G Show*. Recently, 20th Century Fox released a movie starring Cohen as his character Borat titled *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*. Borat is a fictional Kazakhstan journalist who interviews real people who believe that Borat is an actual journalist and that they are being filmed for a Kazak television program. The character is portrayed as foreign, awkward, and eager to know about American ways. In his interactions with the individuals he is interviewing, he reveals racist, anti-Semitic, and sexist views. His naïve manner, which may resemble a stereotype of foreigners held in the Western world, ironically enables people to tolerate him. Cohen claims that the intention of his humor is to capture people's reactions to the foreign character's boorish and otherwise unacceptable behavior (Strauss, 2006). Borat and the situations he creates are intended to expose the interviewees' indifference to, at best, and blatant evidence of, at worst, prejudice and racism. The character has received worldwide attention and has sparked controversy since its beginnings.

Specifically, criticisms have been raised about the portrayal of the character and its effect on the image of the country and people of Kazakhstan (Mong, 2006). It has been argued that misinterpretations by the general Western public in the post 9/11 era create a stereotype for Kazakhstan, for which Kazakhstan has little power to defend (Idrissov, 2006a). It may also reinforce already existing ideas of 'otherness' and allow racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic content to be acceptable (Anti-Defamation League, 2006). The treatment of the subjects in the film is also ethically questionable, especially regarding the underprivileged residents of the Romanian village who were filmed as Kazakhstan villagers (Ionescu & Pancevski, 2006). Regardless of Cohen's intentions or assertions of a political agenda, one

must question the actual social impact of the Borat character as it grew to become an international sensation. An analysis of the development of Cohen's characters and career reveals that although Cohen has political sensibilities, his agenda may not be primarily political in nature, and that access to major media outlets imposes a powerful influence that has negative social outcomes.

Sacha Baron Cohen and his Three Characters

Sacha Baron Cohen was born and raised in England and comes from a Jewish middle-class family. Growing up, Cohen attended a private school and in an interview with *Rolling Stone Magazine* (Strauss, 2006), Cohen described how he has enjoyed Peter Sellers and Monty Python films since he was young. Educated at Oxford University, he completed a master's degree for which he wrote a thesis on the Jewish involvement in the American Civil Rights Movement. He has close ties with Israel since his grandmother currently lives there and he himself had lived on a kibbutz in Northern Israel for a year. He also speaks Hebrew fluently. When Cohen graduated from university he aspired to become an entertainer and gave himself five years to make it in show business.

His early career began in England in 1994. Channel 4, a public television broadcasting corporation in the United Kingdom, had an opening for the late night comedy show *The Word* and was looking for a replacement. This is when Cohen sent in a tape of a character 'Kristo Shqiptari' a fictional Albanian television reporter, one of the predecessors of the character 'Borat.' Kristo, who has the same accent, mustache, and quirks as Borat, did not make the part but Cohen succeeded in impressing the producer of Channel 4. In the meantime, another character created by Cohen, Ali G, became popular. Originally, as Cohen explained in the *Rolling Stone* interview, Ali G came into being after he and a friend learned that their bogus 'gangsta' rapper characters were convincing to normal people on the street as authentic. After appearing as Ali G on *The Eleven O'Clock Show*, a satirical comedy program on Channel 4, *Da Ali G Show* was aired on the same channel by the year 2000. Ali G's premise was to interview influential people with idiotic and ignorant questions. The irony in the situation is how people being interviewed would mostly go along with the ridiculous material. Originally named MC Jocelyn Cheadle-Hume, the producer of Channel 4, Harry Thompson, changed the wanna-be gangsta character's name to Ali G, an "ethnic" name, so that the people being interviewed would be less likely to challenge him in fear of being accused as a racist. Thompson was aware that people would behave with more tolerance to an ethnic minority in front of a television camera and so this aspect of Cohen's character was manipulated. An example of Ali G content would be in an interview with Pat Buchanan, an American politician, Ali G successfully got him to use the term BLT instead of WMD (mis-termed previously by Ali G himself) in a discussion about weapons of mass destruction.

Cohen's third character is Bruno, a flamboyant, gay Austrian fashion reporter who also convinces his interviewees that he is genuine. Often directed to people of the fashion world, Bruno would lead his interviewees to again expose prejudice and ignorance and to contradict themselves while participating in ridiculous conversations.

While Ali G was rising to fame, Cohen was working on another character named Alexi Krickler, a reporter from Moldova, who was strangely dressed and incapable of understanding British English expressions and culture. In an interview Cohen claims that Alexi Krickler, the forefather of Borat, was based on a quirky Russian man who Cohen met and was amused by on a vacation to a beach resort in Russia. A final version of this character is Borat.

Cohen's most recent upsurge in his comedic career is the filming of the movie *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*. Directed by Larry Charles (most known for his work on *Seinfeld* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*), and co-written by Cohen and Anthony Hines (also the writers for *Da Ali G Show*) this movie was an international hit. It was received with great attention in Western countries, while Russia banned the film and Kazakhstan's largest chain of cinemas will decidedly not be showing it.

An Examination of the Character Borat

From the history of the development of the character, Borat, it can be assumed that the character was intended to be of Eastern European background, which may have been presented by the British comedian to be seen as humorously backwards to a British audience. The character Kristo Shqiptari, from Albania, developed into Alexi Krickler from Moldova, and then finally Borat from Kazakhstan. All are characterized with dark puffy hair, a full moustache, and all speak with what is intended to be a thick Eastern European-resembling accent. His personality is well intentioned, but also naïve, racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic. The anti-Semitism resembles an older Eastern European stereotype that draws heavily on the history of Eastern Europe as a place of violence against Jews and Roma. Borat's statements are intended to be so ridiculous that it should be impossible to believe that they are serious. Some examples of these statements are that his sister is a prostitute, with whom he sometimes fornicates, the national drink of Kazakhstan is made of horse urine, and that women are kept in cages and rank in order of importance after horses and dogs.

His genre of humor may be described as ethnic and Semitic and influenced by British humor. It also bears similarities to Minstrel Shows in 19th century America, where White actors attempted to portray Blacks humorously through stereotypical characters. Cohen's character Borat makes fun of existing general stereotypes of foreigners within the British and American public. In order for Cohen's humor to exist, participating subjects cannot know of their actual involvement in the situation

and there is a play on the information gap between the comedian and the subject. He has been compared to Andy Kaufman (The Associated Press, 2006) who tricks people into believing a ridiculous encounter is real. Kaufman has also created and played the foreign character, Latka Gravas, who possesses a naïve, awkward, and ridiculous presence on the sitcom *Taxi*. It may be noted that Latka was not from a specific country. Similarly, Peter Sellers also portrayed a foreign man whose nationality was ambiguous in the film *Dr. Strangelove*. Charlie Chaplin also used a similar idea in *The Great Dictator*, which was an obvious take on Nazi Germany, but in this film the swastika, the German language, and the country names were skewed so not to be exact, which presented a sensitive situation with more taste. In the Borat film, Cohen used Hebrew and bits of Polish when his subjects believed he was speaking Kazakh. To a Western ear not familiar with languages of the Eastern European or Middle Eastern regions, it is difficult to differentiate and so it is easy for Cohen to dupe people into believing he is speaking Kazakh. Cohen can be criticized for using an actual nationality in his character development, which is insensitive to the danger that the created stereotype's effect may have on Kazakhstan.

Comparisons can also be made to Canadian comedian Rick Mercer who, in his act *Talking to Americans*, exposes some Americans' ignorance about Canada. Likewise, the point of Cohen's joke is the exposure of bigotry and ignorance of some American people. A humorous aspect for viewers of Borat is that if they know that Borat is actually not from Kazakhstan it is funny to watch the subjects in the film get duped and simultaneously reveal their socially unacceptable beliefs. After all, this is the point of the joke.

Borat and the Media

The problem with the style of humor used by Borat is that he creates an image of the way people might be like in Kazakhstan. This stereotype may be quickly accepted by those who are unaware that he is not actually from Kazakhstan or at least considered by those who know he is not from Kazakhstan. For the joke to work, it would require that the subject Borat approaches does not have any idea about Kazakhstan so that the character can be believable. Cohen rarely comes out of character and so after subjects encounter Borat, they are left to believe that the interaction was indeed genuine. This is easy when targeting uninformed people who are unaware of other cultures except for their portrayal in the media. In this time of post 9/11, the view of foreigners as outsiders is strong. (One might also argue that Borat's depiction of the animosity between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is mirrored by the conflict between the Muslim world and the West). The skewed presentation of foreigners (especially Muslim, and Middle Eastern) in the media result in the acceptance of Borat as a real person. Henceforth, a stereotype of a person from Kazakhstan is planted. In addition to this, the filming style is meant to mock the idea that foreign countries have lower quality media. This also adds

to a negative stereotype of Kazakhstan as being a backward and undeveloped nation. The film's picture is of low quality and the film workmanship is presented as amateurish. Cohen's website for Borat is intended to be seen as tacky and far from advanced in graphic design techniques and style. Whether or not media production in Kazakhstan is as developed as it is in the West, the portrayals of such are patronizing to the abilities of Kazakh people.

A general understanding of stereotypes is that they come from somewhere. What is different in the case of Borat is that the stereotype was created first and viewers are left trying to find the grain of truth. The general western public has not been exposed to any major Kazakhstan people in the media, therefore Borat has a major impact and provides a framework for which to compare any new knowledge or information regarding Kazakhstan. Even for those who are aware and 'in the know' that the character development is entirely fictional, if one is not familiar with Kazakhstan than this film's depiction will automatically be the first bit of 'knowledge' about the country. Some evidence of this may easily be discovered in responses to the character posted on the Internet. In the editorial section of the *Montreal Gazette* online (2006), one woman who is an international graduate student from Kazakhstan studying in the United States wrote that whenever she tells people that she is from Kazakhstan people ask her if she knows 'Borat, the sixth most famous man in Kazakhstan.' She is then constantly put in a position to explain that Borat is a satirical fictional character who far from represents the country or people of Kazakhstan accurately.

Additionally, a man who adopted a baby girl from Kazakhstan writes an article revealing the effects of Borat's created stereotype in *Slate Magazine* (Weiner, 2006). He is motivated to discover what Borat got right and wrong about Kazakhstan since "after all would you want your daughter associated with a urine-drinking, wife-beating, cow-punching, sister-fucking, prostitute-ridden, anti-Semitic nation?" (para. 1). Even though the author of the article is aware that Borat is fictional, he used Borat's Kazakhstan as a framework to describe the truths and discrepancies about the country. He concludes his article by examining what Kazakhstan can do facing this satirical onslaught while criticizing Kazakhstan's initial responses to Borat as being "the old-fashioned Soviet way: with paranoia and thinly veiled threats" (para. 12). More disturbing is the way the article wraps up. "What will I tell people, post-Borat, when they ask me where my daughter is from? I will proudly say she is from Kazakhstan. It is *niiiiice*. Big country, people good. People big enough to laugh at themselves. I like. You like?" (para. 13). How unfortunate that a little girl will likely grow up in an environment where her own father holds patronizing views of her country of birth.

The Kazakhstan government is not ignorant to the effects of such a negative portrayal of Kazakhstan, and mixed reactions to the character have been reported in Western media. Feelings of being offended are expressed, while some Kazakhs stressed acceptance of the humor (Wolf, 2005; BBC News website, 2006). What is interesting to examine are the power structures behind this situation. If a major

American media outlet (20th Century Fox) decides to release a film depicting a possible stereotypical presentation of Kazakhstan and its people, than there is little that Kazakhstan can do to protect itself, or correct any assumptions that are created as a result of such a film. Competing with 20th Century Fox in the media world is next to impossible. In fact, the reality has been that negative responses to Borat by Kazakhstan have been presented in the Western media as defensive and unaware of the actual intention of the film. Kazakhstan was not in on the joke and therefore could be seen as backwards, irrationally offended and their problem was that they did not 'get it.' This kind of reaction might be typical of a naïve person unable to understand social or cultural situations. Someone like Borat.

Responses by Kazakhstan authorities have generated negative press in Western media. Kazakhstan is often presented as unreasonable when the relationship between Borat and Kazakhstan is discussed. The foreign press secretary for the embassy of Kazakhstan, Roman Vassilenko, has attempted to clarify misconceptions about his country brought on by the *Borat* film. This was reported by Radosh (2004) in *The New Yorker* online, and the article has a humorous slant that makes fun of these attempts. When Vassilenko was asked about Borat's claim that "in Kazakhstan, the favorite hobbies are disco dancing, archery, rape, and table tennis" Vassilnko responded with "only the first and the last" (para. 5). The reporter also asked about *kokpar*, a sport played in Kazakhstan. The author reported his response in a way that suggested that he viewed the practice as barbaric. "When Vassilenko was asked about it, he hesitated, then explained, 'That's the one where a goat, a dead goat'—a headless dead goat—is, um, being held as a sort of prize. And then one rider has it, and he has to run away with it from others who seek to catch it and snatch it from him.' And then they have a party" (para. 8). The additional quote "And then they have a party" is from one of Borat's songs, "Kill the Jew," which describes having a party after the Jew is thrown down the well. From this, it may be interpreted that the author's intention is not to help the Foreign Press Secretary clear the Kazakh name, but to make fun of the situation.

Additionally, the elimination of Cohen's original website for Borat with the Kazakhstan domain .kz was presented as irrational and undemocratic in Western media. Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based organization subsequently placed Kazakhstan on a list of countries to watch, stating that the government shut down websites that mocked or criticized Kazakhstan. An article in *Foreign Affairs* (Cukier, 2006) also criticized the Kazakh government for lack of freedom of expression by stating that the "government's reaction was itself humorous, but the underlying issue is not" (para. 2). Although freedom of expression may be at stake, it is hardly necessary for the *Foreign Affairs* article to call the government's reaction "humorous," adding to the ridiculousness of the Kazakh stereotype.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev made a visit to America to meet with George W. Bush. At around the same time, there was a placement of a large multi-page advertisement "Kazakhstan in the 21st Century" in *The New York Times*.

British media reported that Bush and Nazarbayev were meeting to discuss the Borat film. This claim was denied by Erlan Idrisso (2006b), Kazakh's Ambassador to the United Kingdom, who stated that the visit had nothing to do with the Borat film. Moreover, the meeting was not to speak about Borat, but was about more serious things, such as America's increasing political and economic ties with Kazakhstan. Multiple media sources also accused the Kazakh government of being unreasonably defensive in its retaliation to Borat by placing an expensive 4-page advertisement in *The New York Times*. Idrisso also explains that "the advertisements highlighting my country's achievements which recently appeared in U.S. newspapers were placed to coincide with the visit of the Kazakhstan President to Washington; they were not intended as a reply to Borat. Might it just be that the claims to the contrary by the film-makers' publicity agents derive from their desire to maximize takings at the box office?" (para. 5).

Cohen grabs at opportunities to promote his film by staging Borat in media-covered events. Promotion of the film has also involved improvising with the controversy Borat evoked from Kazakhstan. One major appearance was at an MTV Europe awards in 2005. When Kazakhstan officials were informed of the rude character claiming to be from Kazakhstan, Foreign Ministry spokesman Yerzhan Ashykbayev retaliated with the threat of legal action against Cohen. Cohen then reacted by making a filmed statement claiming not to know Cohen and that he supports his government's decision to sue this Jew. He also made outrageous comments about Kazakhstan's social progression, such as "women can now travel on inside of bus" and "the age of consent has been raised to eight years old." This comeback was a powerful weapon against Kazakhstan's attempt to regain dignity—instead they lost more in the eyes of the Western media. Additionally, Cohen showed up at the White House in Borat character with a slew of media workers gathered around him. The appearance was to hold a press conference and Borat commented on the 4-page advertisements as falsifications created by Uzbek imposters. He also reports that there is a screening the next night and he came to the White House to personally deliver an invitation to George W. Bush, who just happened to be receiving the President of Kazakhstan the very next day. In his press conference, Borat stated that the visit was intended to promote his film. His conference video was placed on his website, borat.tv. This spectacular and creative publicity stunt succeeded in both promoting the film and reinforcing the theme of Kazakhstan being an insignificant, ridiculous nation.

The power structure imbalance between the Western media giant-backed Cohen and the Kazakhstan people is obviously apparent and the people of Kazakhstan are more than aware. Initial reactions in defense of the honor of their nation were seen as over-reaction by Western eyes. As an article at brandchannel.com (Saur, 2006) clearly acknowledges, "Those savvy to the PR world know the inherent folly of attempting to combat sarcasm or satire with earnestness" (para. 5). Of course those of the Western PR world might know this, but would they know how to respond

in another way? Kazakhstan, not being Western, would likely not be aware of this language of power, and so it is unfortunate that they are judged by such standards. It is interesting to note the change in the public reaction of Kazakhstan toward Borat. A comparison of Erlan Idrissoy's two articles clearly shows a change in approach, although the point of view remains the same. The Ambassador to the United Kingdom's first article appears in *Guardian Unlimited* (2006a), written on October 4th, 2006. The article is titled "Offensive and unfair, Borat's antics leave a nasty aftertaste" and displayed bitter views about Borat's Kazakhstan and his keen awareness of the danger it has on the image of his country and people. Multiple reactions from cybercitizens are posted below his article, stating that Idrissoy should lighten up, and that the Borat movie will not have a negative effect on Kazakhstan. He is also told to appreciate the attention that Kazakhstan would otherwise never receive. One article condemned the country for having low human rights records, almost seemingly justifying the portrayal of Borat. Idrissoy's second article was written over a month later on November 12th in the *Daily Mail* (2006). It is titled "We survived Stalin and we can certainly overcome Borat's slurs" and has a more optimistic slant. It begins with expressions of appreciation for the press inquiries the film created and also commented on the talent of Cohen and the humor of his comedy. The second part of the article criticized the negative aspects of the film and the portrayal of Kazakhstan in the media, using examples such as the reaction to the advertisements and the misunderstood visit of the Kazakh President to America. This change in writing from the first to the second letter shows how Kazakhstan media spokespeople were pushed into a corner and had to react in an acceptable manner for Western tastes in response to the tasteless representation of their own country.

Picking On Someone Your Own Size

Cohen's humor is largely anti-Semitic in his often negative portrayal of Jews, especially through the Borat character. This characteristic is a more acceptable form of humor for Cohen, since he is himself a Jew. In fact, it has been reported in the *Washington Post* (Heller, 2006) that in Israel Borat was seen in a different light, since Cohen was using Hebrew that corresponded, more or less, to what his "Kazakh" was captioned as in English. Cohen included an additional layer of jokes that could only be understood by people who speak Hebrew. With ethnic comedy, the important factor is who is delivering the comedy about whom. It may be acceptable for a Black comedian to deliver Black humor, making fun of Black stereotypes, as does Dave Chappelle. However, a White comedian would not be considered humorous, or politically correct, with such humor since there is a history and current status quo of Blacks being marginalized by the dominant White majority. Only in the 19th century when Blacks held significantly less power than they do today were Minstrel shows acceptable to mainstream culture. Comedians like Russell Peters can also be tasteful in their humorous interpretations of stereotypes affecting themselves and

other more or less equally marginalized groups. This power structure is important when considering a target group of which to make fun.

In the case of Cohen with his character Borat, he is a Jewish British national poking fun of an Eastern European nation with 50% of the population being Muslim. Although there are no direct inferences toward poking fun at people of Islamic background, the character's dark hair and mustache, dominant characteristics, and cultural signifiers of Middle Easterners may be criticized as too similar to a Western stereotype of a Muslim. In today's age, with a heated conflict between Western and Muslim worlds, this is tasteless at best and dangerous at worst.

One of the most exploitive aspects of the making of this film is the depiction and use of the Roma villagers, who were used to illustrate Borat's homeland in Kazakhstan. Another stab to Kazakhstan's image, the film crew went into Roma to a remote and poverty-stricken village where they paid residents to take part in a film without knowing what the film was about, and especially unaware of their roles. The unawareness of Borat's subjects is ethically questionable; there is no reason why these people should have been left in the dark, except, of course for convenience. If the villagers were aware of the actual situation, perhaps they would have refused to participate or perhaps would have demanded more money. The portrayal of these lower-income people as humorous is distasteful and patronizing to their way of life. Western reporters have made their way into the village to interview the residents and after the villagers were made aware of the reality of the situation, they feel angry and foolish (Ionescu & Pancevski, 2006). It is also disturbing that it is likely that these people have too little power to do anything about their situation due to their low socio-economic status. Because of the way they are presented in the film, viewers may have interpreted their situation as humorously backward, instead of as people in need of economic opportunities. Unfortunately this part of the film also supports the depiction of Kazakhstan as a backward, barbaric country.

Other involuntary participants involved in Cohen's film have felt exploited. A number of people are in the process of suing the producers of the film. Some of these lawsuits, so far, have been thrown out of court and others are still underway. However, it may be safe to assume that a company such as 20th Century Fox was able to afford keen lawyers to consult throughout the movie production. Also, after a \$18,000,000 budget that multiplied in its earnings, the company can afford not only the best lawyers, but can afford to go to court for a much longer period of time. The likelihood of winning a case against powerful 20th Century Fox is low and the people searching for justice are faced with a serious fight.

Conclusion

Cohen will defend his character Borat as being a tool to uncover racism and anti-Semitism in America. However, it is ironic that the very methods he employs in the production and filming of his character are themselves discriminatory. Airing

Borat on a television program can have a negative effect on those watching in two ways. They may either adapt the stereotype shown of other people or they are a member of the group about which the program encourages stereotypes, such as a Kazakh, an Eastern European, or possibly a Muslim, and then they must face these growing stereotypes in society. The film was especially hurtful since the access to major media allowed it to reach significantly more people and therefore the effects are more widespread.

Finally, in the earlier mentioned interview with *Rolling Stone* (Strauss, 2006), Cohen comments on a major Thirds Reich historian Ian Kershaw from whom he learned the negative effects of apathy. Cohen quotes him by saying “The path to Auschwitz was paved with indifference” (para. 3). Strangely, Cohen seems to be indifferent to the patronizing attitudes toward Kazakhstan by both himself and the general public since his character rose to fame. He seems to be indifferent to the exploitation of the villagers in Romania and to the potential interpretation of Borat’s character as a representation as a Muslim. He also donned indifference when the Anti-Defamation League expressed concerns about the possibility of people misinterpreting his humor, thus creating tolerance for anti-Semitism. The path to Cohen’s rise to international fame and stardom through the production of the Borat film was paved with indifference.

References

- Anti-Defamation League. (2006). *Statement on the comedy of Sacha Baron Cohen, A.K.A. “Borat.”* Retrieved November 12, 2006, from the ADL Anti-Defamation League Website: http://www.adl.org/PresRele/Mise_00/4898_00.htm
- Baron Cohen, S. (2006). *Here is what I say.* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from Borat Website: <http://borat.tv/speech.htm>
- Bekbayeva, R., Cowen, J., & Crownover, S. (2006). *Kazakhstan in the 21st century* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from *International Herald Tribune Advertising Supplements* Website: <http://www.iht.com/indexes/sponsored/web.1124kazakhstan/index.php>
- BBC News. (2006). *Kazakhs see funny side of Borat.* Retrieved November 16, 2006 from, British Broadcasting Corporation Website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/entertainment/5393168.stm>
- BBC News. (2006). *Kazakh invite for Borat creator.* Retrieved November 16, 2006 from, British Broadcasting Corporation Website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fe/-/1/hi/entertainment/6066040.stm>
- Biography (nod.) Retrieved November 16, 2006, Sacha Baron Cohen Website: <http://sachabaroncohen.narod.ru/>
- Carozza, B. (2006). *Breaking: Subtle humour lost on North Americans, Baron Cohen forced to defend Borat.* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from DOSE.ca Website: www.dose.ca
- CBC Arts. (2006). *Borat visits Kazakh embassy, White House.* Retrieved November 12, 2006 from Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Website: <http://www/cbc.ca/atrs/story/2006/09/29/borat-washington-visits.html?ref=rss>
- CTV News. (2006). *Borat a growing PR headache for Kazakhstan.* Retrieved November

- 16, 2006, from CTV.ca Website: http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTC-News/20060928/borat_white_house_060928?s_name=&no_ads=
- Cukier, Kenneth, N. (2005) *No joke*. Retrieved November 12, 2006 from *Foreign Affairs* Website: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20051228faupdate81576/kenneth-neil-cukier/no-joke.html>
- Engber, D. (2006). *Borat tricked me! Can't I sue him or something?* Retrieved November 12, 2006 from *Slate* Website: <http://www.slate.com/id2151865/fr/rss>
- Gordon, D. (2006). *Meet the real people in 'Borat'*. Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15175836/site/newsweek/>
- Gorman, S. (2006). College frat boys in "Borat" movie sue filmmakers Retrieved January 3, 2007 from Reuters Website: http://in.today.reuters.com/News/newsArticle.aspx?type=entertainmentNews&storyID=2006-11-11T063059Z_01_NOOTR_RTR-JONC_0_India-275843-1.xml
- Heller, A. (2006). *Israelis dig 'Borat' jokes in Hebrew*. Retrieved January 2, 2006, from *Washington Post*.com Website: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/14/AR2006121400904.html>
- Idrissov, E. (2006). *We survived Stalin and we can certainly overcome Borat's slurs*. Retrieved November 12, 2006, from *Times Online* Website: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,1072-243462.html>
- Idrissov, E. (2006). *Offensive and unfair, Borat's antics leave a nasty aftertaste*. Retrieved January 2, 2007, from *Guardian Unlimited* Website: <http://film.guardian.co.uk/features/featurepages/0,,1886886,00.html>
- Ionescu, C., & Pancevski, B. (2006). *Borat film 'tricked' poor village actors*. Retrieved January 2, 2006, from *Daily Mail* Website: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=41571&in_page_id=1770
- Leehr, S. (2006). *Borat's humor falls on deaf ears*. Retrieved November 16, 2006, from *Echo Online Opinion* Website: <http://www.easternecho.com/cgi-bin/story.cgi?31500>
- Lundegaard, E. (2006). *For your consideration: Sacha Baron Cohen*. Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15420637>
- Mong, A. (2006). *NBC: Don't expect Kazakhs to laugh at 'Borat.'* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15447058>
- Montreal Gazette*. (2006). *Borat movie clever but the real country is much more interesting*. Retrieved November 13, 2006, from *Canada.com* Website: <http://www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/editorial/story.html?id=4602a6ba-aea4-4e11-967f-b70a62a772d>
- Onstad, K. (2006). *Crass clown*. Retrieved November 12, 2006, from *CBC.ca Arts* Website: <http://www/cbc.ca/arts/film/borat.html>
- Radosh, D. (2004). *The Borat doctrine*. Retrieved January 3, 2007, from *The New Yorker* Department of Foreign Relations Website: http://newyorker.com/printables/talk/040920ta_talk_radosh
- Reporters Without Borders. (2006). *Reporters without borders raps censorship of UK comedian's "Borat" website*. Retrieved January 2, 2006, from Reporters Without Borders Website: http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=15919
- Reuters. (2006). *British comic Cohen defends his alter ego Borat*. Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15739442>
- Reuters. (2006). *Kazakh anger has yet to subside over Borat*. Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15503357>

26 Examining Borat and His Influence on Society

- Saur, A. (2006). *Borat vs. Kazakhstan- identity crisis?* Retrieved November 11, 2006, from brandchannel.com Website: http://www.brandchannel.com/print_page.asp?ar_id+308§ion=profile
- Strauss, N. (2006). *The man behind the mustache.* Retrieved December 15, 2006, from *The RollingStone* Website: http://www.rollingstone.com/news/coverstory/sacha_baron_cohen_the_real_borat_finally_speaks/page/1
- The Associated Press. (2006). *Does 'Borat' make Cohen the new Kaufman?* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15503241>
- The Associated Press. (2006). *Russian government may ban 'Borat.'* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from MSNBC.com Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/15643875>
- Weiner, E. (2006). *The real Kazakhstan.* Retrieved November 12, 2006, from *Slate Magazine* Online Website: <http://www.slate.com/id/2152789/?nav=ais>
- Wolf, B. (2005). *Kazakhstan not laughing at 'Ali G.'* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from ABC News website: <http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/story?id=1315240>
- Youngs, I. (2006). *How Borat coaxed America.* Retrieved November 16, 2006, from BBC News Entertainment Website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/entertainment/6071486.stm>

Pauline Carpenter is a graduate student in education at McGill University.